THE LAST OF THE BARONS

The Duchess drew aside the drapery, and contemplated the rosy face of the infant slumberer.

THE LAST OF THE BARONS

By

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

Illustrated by

E. POLLAK

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THE LAST OF THE BARONS

BOOK VII

THE POPULAR REBELLION

CHAPTER I

THE WHITE LION OF MARCH SHAKES HIS MANE

"And what news?" asked Hastings, as he found himself amidst the king's squires; while yet was heard the laugh of the *tymbesteres,* and yet gliding through the trees, might be seen the retreating form of Sibyll.

"My lord, the king needs you instantly. A courier has just arrived from the North. The Lords St. John, Rivers, De Fulke, and Scales, are already with his highness."

"Where?"

"In the great council chamber."

To that memorable room,* in the White Tower, in which the visitor, on entrance, is first reminded of the name and fate of Hastings, strode the unprophetic lord.

He found Edward not reclining on cushions and carpets—not womanlike in loose robes—not with his lazy smile upon his sleek beauty. The king had doffed his gown, and stood erect in the tight tunic, which

* It was from this room that Hastings was hurried to execution, June 13, 1483.

gave in full perfection the splendid proportions of a frame unsurpassed in activity and strength. Before him, on the long table, lay two or three open letters—beside the dagger with which Edward had cut the silk that bound them. Around him gravely sate Lord Rivers, Anthony Woodville, Lord St. John, Raoul de Fulke, the young and valiant D'Eyncourt, and many other of the principal lords. Hastings saw at once that something of pith and moment had occurred; and by the fire in the king's eye, the dilation of his nostril, the cheerful and almost joyous pride of his mien and brow, the experienced courtier read the signs of WAR.

"Welcome, brave Hastings," said Edward, in a voice wholly changed from its wonted soft affectation—loud, clear, and thrilling as it went through the marrow and heart of all who heard its stirring and trumpet accent—"Welcome now to the field as ever to the banquet! We have news from the North, that bid us brace on the burgonot, and buckle-to the brand—a revolt that requires a king's arm to quell. In Yorkshire, fifteen thousand men are in arms, under a leader they call Robin of Redesdale—the pretext, a thrave of corn demanded by the Hospital of St. Leonard's—the true design, that of treason to our realm. At the same time, we hear from our brother of Gloucester, now on the border, that the Scotch have lifted the Lancaster Rose. There is peril if these two armies meet;—no time to lose—they are saddling our war-steeds—we hasten to the van of our royal force. We shall have warm work, my lords. But who is worthy of a throne that cannot guard it?"

"This is sad tidings indeed, sire," said Hastings, gravely.

"Sad! Say it not, Hastings! War is the chase of

kings! Sir Raoul de Fulke!—why lookest thou brooding and sorrowful?"

"Sire, I but thought that had Earl Warwick been in England, this——"

"Ha!" interrupted Edward, haughtily and hastily —"and is Warwick the sun of heaven that no cloud can darken where his face may shine? The rebels shall need no foe, my realm no regent, while I, the heir of the Plantagenets, have the sword for one, the sceptre for the other. We depart this evening ere the sun be set."

"My liege," said the Lord St. John, gravely— "on what forces do you count to meet so formidable an array?"

"All England, Lord of St. John!"

"Alack! my liege, may you not deceive yourself! But in this crisis, it is right that your leal and trusty subjects should speak out and plainly. It seems that these insurgents clamour not against yourself, but against the queen's relations—yes, my Lord Rivers, against you and your house, and I fear me that the hearts of England are with them here."

"It is true, sire," put in Raoul de Fulke, boldly— "and if these new men are to head your armies, the warriors of Touton will stand aloof—Raoul de Fulke serves no Woodville's banner. Frown not, Lord de Scales! it is the griping avarice of you and yours that has brought this evil on the king. For you the commons have been pillaged—for you the daughters of our peers have been forced into monstrous marriages, at war with birth and with nature herself. For you, the princely Warwick, near to the throne in blood, and front and pillar of our time-honoured order of seigneur and of knight, has been thrust from our suzerain's favour. And if now ye are to march at the van of war—*you* to

be avengers of the strife of which *ye* are the cause —I say that the soldiers will lack heart, and the provinces ye pass through will be the country of a foe!"

"Vain man!" began Anthony Woodville, when Hastings laid his hand on his arm, while Edward, amazed at this outburst from two of the supporters on whom he principally counted, had the prudence to suppress his resentment—and remained silent, but with the aspect of one resolved to command obedience, when he once deemed it right to interfere.

"Hold, Sir Anthony!" said Hastings, who, the moment he found himself with men, woke to all the manly spirit and profound wisdom that had rendered his name illustrious—"hold, and let me have the word; my Lords St. John and De Fulke, your charges are more against me than against these gentlemen, for *I* am a new man—a squire by birth—and proud to derive mine honours from the same origin as all true nobility —I mean the grace of a noble liege, and the happy fortune of a soldier's sword. It may be" (and here the artful favourite, the most beloved of the whole court, inclined himself meekly)—"it may be that I have not borne those honours so mildly as to disarm blame. In the war to be, let me atone. My liege, hear your servant: give me no command—let me be a simple soldier, fighting by your side. My example who will not follow?—proud to ride but as a man of arms along the track which the sword of his sovereign shall cut through the ranks of battle? Not you, Lord de Scales, redoubtable and invincible with lance and axe; let us new men soothe envy by our deeds; and you, Lords St. John and De Fulke—you shall teach us how your fathers led warriors who did not fight more gallantly than we will. And when rebellion is at rest—when we

meet again in our suzerain's hall—accuse us new men, if you can find us faulty, and we will answer you as we best may?"

This address, which could have come from no man with such effect as from Hastings, touched all present. And though the Woodvilles, father and son, saw in it much to gall their pride, and half believed it a snare for their humiliation, they made no opposition. Raoul de Fulke, ever generous as fiery, stretched forth his hand, and said—

"Lord Hastings, you have spoken well. Be it as the king wills."

"My lords," returned Edward, gaily, "my will is that ye be friends while a foe is in the field. Hasten, then, I beseech you, one and all, to raise your vassals, and join our standard at Fotheringay. I will find ye posts that shall content the bravest."

The king made a sign to break up the conference, and, dismissing even the Woodvilles, was left alone with Hastings.

"Thou hast served me at need, Will," said the king. "But I shall remember" (and his eye flashed a tiger's fire) "the mouthing of those mock-pieces of the lords at Runnymede. I am no John, to be bearded by my vassals. Enough of them now. Think you Warwick can have abetted this revolt?"

"A revolt of peasants and yeomen! No, sire. If he did so, farewell for ever to the love the barons bear him."

"Um! and yet Montagu, whom I dismissed ten days since to the Borders, hearing of disaffection, hath done nought to check it. But come what may, his must be a bold lance that shivers against a king's mail. And now one kiss of my lady Bessee, one cup of the bright

canary, and then God and St. George for the White Rose!"

CHAPTER II

THE CAMP AT OLNEY

It was some weeks after the citizens of London had seen their gallant king, at the head of such forces as were collected in haste in the metropolis, depart from their walls to the encounter of the rebels. Surprising and disastrous had been the tidings in the interim. At first, indeed, there were hopes that the insurrection had been put down by Montagu, who had defeated the troops of Robin of Redesdale, near the city of York, and was said to have beheaded their leader. But the spirit of discontent was only fanned by an adverse wind. The popular hatred to the Woodvilles was so great, that in proportion as Edward advanced to the scene of action, the country rose in arms as Raoul de Fulke had predicted. Leaders of lordly birth now headed the rebellion; the sons of the Lords Latimer and Fitzhugh (near kinsmen of the House of Nevile) lent their names to the cause: and Sir John Coniers, an experienced soldier, whose claims had been disregarded by Edward, gave to the insurgents the aid of a formidable capacity for war. In every mouth was the story of the Duchess of Bedford's witchcraft; and the waxen figure of the earl did more to rouse the people than perhaps the earl himself could have done in person.* As yet, however, the language of the insurgents

* See "Parliamentary Rolls," vi. 232, for the accusations of witchcraft, and the fabrication of a necromantic image of Lord Warwick, circulated against the Duchess of Bedford. She herself quotes, and complains of, them.

was tempered with all personal respect to the king; they declared in their manifestoes that they desired only the banishment of the Woodvilles and the recall of Warwick, whose name they used unscrupulously, and whom they declared they were on their way to meet. As soon as it was known that the kinsmen of the beloved earl were in the revolt, and naturally supposed that the earl himself must countenance the enterprise, the tumultuous camp swelled every hour, while knight after knight, veteran after veteran, abandoned the royal standard. The Lord d'Eyncourt (one of the few lords of the highest birth and greatest following, over whom the Neviles had no influence, and who bore the Woodvilles no grudge) had, in his way to Lincolnshire,—where his personal aid was necessary to rouse his vassals, infected by the common sedition,—been attacked and wounded by a body of marauders, and thus Edward's camp lost one of its greatest leaders. Fierce dispute broke out in the king's councils; and when the witch Jacquetta's practices against the earl travelled from the hostile into the royal camp, Raoul de Fulke, St. John, and others, seized with pious horror, positively declared they would throw down their arms and retire to their castles, unless the Woodvilles were dismissed from the camp and the Earl of Warwick was recalled to England. To the first demand the king was constrained to yield; with the second he temporized. He marched from Fotheringay to Newark: but the signs of disaffection, though they could not dismay him as a soldier, altered his plans as a captain of singular military acuteness; he fell back on Nottingham, and dispatched, with his own hands, letters to Clarence, the Archbishop of York, and Warwick. To the last he wrote touchingly. "We do not believe"

(said the letter) "that ye should be of any such disposition towards us, as the rumour here runneth, considering the trust and affection we bear you—and cousin, we think ye shall be to us welcome." * But ere these letters reached the destination, the crown seemed well-nigh lost. At Edgecote, the Earl of Pembroke was defeated and slain, and five thousand royalists were left on the field. Earl Rivers, and his son, Sir John Woodville,† who, in obedience to the royal order, had retired to the earl's country seat of Grafton, were taken prisoners, and beheaded by the vengeance of the insurgents. The same lamentable fate befell the Lord Stafford, on whom Edward relied as one of his most puissant leaders; and London heard with dismay that the king, with but a handful of troops, and those lukewarm and disaffected, was begirt on all sides by hostile and marching thousands.

From Nottingham, however, Edward made good his retreat to a village called Olney, which chanced at that time to be partially fortified with a wall and a strong gate. Here the rebels pursued him; and Edward, hearing that Sir Anthony Woodville, who conceived that the fate of his father and brother cancelled all motive for longer absence from the contest, was busy in col-

* "Paston Letters," ccxcviii. (Knight's edition), vol. ii., p. 59. See also "Lingard," vol. iii., p. 522 (4to edition), note 43, for the proper date to be assigned to Edward's letter to Warwick, &c.

† This Sir John Woodville was the most obnoxious of the queen's brothers, and infamous for the avarice which had led him to marry the old Duchess of Norfolk, an act which, according to the old laws of chivalry, would have disabled him from entering the lists of knighthood, for the ancient code disqualified and degraded any knight who should marry an old woman for her money! Lord Rivers was the more odious to the people at the time of the insurrection, because, in his capacity of treasurer, he had lately tampered with the coin and circulation.

lecting a force in the neighbourhood of Coventry, while other assistance might be daily expected from London, strengthened the fortifications as well as the time would permit, and awaited the assault of the insurgents.

It was at this crisis, and while throughout all England reigned terror and commotion—that one day, towards the end of July, a small troop of horsemen were seen riding rapidly towards the neighbourhood of Olney. As the village came in view of the cavalcade, with the spire of its church, and its grey stone gateway, so also they beheld, on the pastures that stretched around wide and far, a moving forest of pikes and plumes.

"Holy Mother!" said one of the foremost riders, "Good knight and strong man though Edward be, it were sharp work to cut his way from that hamlet through yonder fields! Brother, we were more welcome, had we brought more bills and bows at our backs!"

"Archbishop," answered the stately personage thus addressed, "we bring what alone raises armies and disbands them—a NAME that a People honours! From the moment the White Bear is seen on yonder archway, side by side with the king's banner—that army will vanish as smoke before the wind."

"Heaven grant it, Warwick!" said the Duke of Clarence, "for, though Edward hath used us sorely, it chafes me as Plantagenet and as prince, to see how peasants and varlets can hem round a king."

"Peasants and varlets are pawns in the chess-board, cousin George," said the prelate, "and knight and bishop find them mighty useful, when pushing forward to an attack. Now knight and bishop appear themselves and take up the game—Warwick," added the

prelate, in a whisper, unheard by Clarence, "forget not, while appeasing rebellion, that the king is in your power."

"For shame, George! I think not now of the unkind king; I think only of the brave boy I dandled on my knee, and whose sword I girded on at Touton. How his lion heart must chafe, condemned to see a foe whom his skill as captain tells him it were madness to confront!"

"Ay, Richard Nevile—ay," said the prelate, with a slight sneer, "play the Paladin, and become the dupe—release the prince, and betray the people!"

"No! I can be true to both. Tush! brother, your craft is slight to the plain wisdom of bold honesty. You slacken your steeds, sirs, on—on—see, the march of the rebels! On, for an Edward and a Warwick!" and, spurring to full speed, the little company arrived at the gates. The loud bugle of the new comers was answered by the cheerful note of the joyous warder,—while dark, slow, and solemn, over the meadows, crept on the mighty cloud of the rebel army.

"We have forestalled the insurgents!" said the earl, throwing himself from his black steed. "Marmaduke Nevile, advance our banner; heralds announce the Duke of Clarence, the Archbishop of York, and the Earl of Salisbury and Warwick."

Through the anxious town, along the crowded walls and house-tops, into the hall of an old mansion (that then adjoined the church), where the king, in complete armour, stood at bay, with stubborn and disaffected officers, rolled the thunder cry—"A Warwick—a Warwick! all saved! a Warwick!"

Sharply, as he heard the clamour, the king turned upon his startled council. "Lords and captains!" said

he, with that inexpressible majesty which he could command in his happier hours, "God and our Patron Saint have sent us at least one man who has the heart to fight fifty times the odds of yon miscreant rabble, by his king's side, and for the honour of loyalty and knighthood!"

"And who says, sire," answered Raoul de Fulke, "that we your lords and captains would not risk blood and life for our king and our knighthood in a just cause? But we will not butcher our countrymen for echoing our own complaint, and praying your grace that a grasping and ambitious family which you have raised to power may no longer degrade your nobles and oppress your commons. We shall see if the Earl of Warwick blame us or approve."

"And I answer," said Edward, loftily, "that whether Warwick approve or blame, come as friend or foe, I will sooner ride alone through yonder archway, and carve out a soldier's grave amongst the ranks of rebellious war, than be the puppet of my subjects, and serve their will by compulsion. Free am I—free ever will I be, while the crown of the Plantagenet is mine, to raise those whom I love, to defy the threats of those sworn to obey me. And were I but Earl of March, instead of king of England, this hall should have swam with the blood of those who have insulted the friends of my youth—the wife of my bosom. Off, Hastings!—I need no mediator with my servants. Nor here, nor anywhere in broad England, have I my equal, and the king forgives or scorns—construe it as ye will, my lords—what the simple gentlemen would avenge."

It were in vain to describe the sensation that this speech produced. There is ever something in courage and in will that awes numbers, though brave them-

selves. And what with the unquestioned valour of Edward—what with the effect of his splendid person, towering above all present by the head, and moving lightly, with each impulse, through the mass of a mail that few there could have borne unsinking, this assertion of absolute power in the midst of mutiny—an army marching to the gates—imposed an unwilling reverence and sullen silence mixed with anger, that, while it chafed, admired. They who, in peace, had despised the voluptuous monarch, feasting in his palace, and reclining on the lap of harlot-beauty, felt that, in war, all Mars seemed living in his person. Then, indeed, he was a king; and had the foe, now darkening the landscape, been the noblest chivalry of France, not a man there but had died for a smile from that haughty lip. But the barons were knit heart in heart with the popular outbreak, and to put down the revolt seemed to them but to raise the Woodvilles. The silence was still unbroken, save where the persuasive whisper of Lord Hastings might be faintly heard in remonstrance with the more powerful or the more stubborn of the chiefs—when the tread of steps resounded without, and, unarmed, bareheaded, the only form in Christendom grander and statelier than the king's, strode into the hall.

Edward, as yet unaware what course Warwick would pursue, and half doubtful whether a revolt that had borrowed his name, and was led by his kinsmen, might not originate in his consent, surrounded by those to whom the earl was especially dear, and aware that if Warwick were against him all was lost, still relaxed not the dignity of his mien; and leaning on his large two-handed sword, with such inward resolves as brave kings and gallant gentlemen form, if the worst

should befall, he watched the majestic strides of his great kinsman, and said as the earl approached, and the mutinous captains louted low—

"Cousin, you are welcome! for truly do I know that when *you* have aught whereof to complain, you take not the moment of danger and disaster. And whatever has chanced to alienate your heart from me, the sound of the rebel's trumpet chases all difference, and marries your faith to mine."

"Oh, Edward, my king, why did you so misjudge me in the prosperous hour!" said Warwick, simply, but with affecting earnestness: "since in the adverse hour you arede me well?"

As he spoke, he bowed his head, and, bending his knee, kissed the hand held out to him.

Edward's face grew radiant, and, raising the earl, he glanced proudly at the barons who stood round, surprised and mute.

"Yes, my lords and sirs, see—it is not the Earl of Warwick, next to our royal brethren, the nearest subject to the throne, who would desert me in the day of peril!"

"Nor do *we*, sire," retorted Raoul de Fulke; "you wrong us before our mighty comrade if you so misthink us. We will fight for the king, but not for the queen's kindred; and this alone brings on us your anger."

"The gates shall be opened to ye. Go! Warwick and I are men enough for the rabble yonder."

The earl's quick eye, and profound experience of his time, saw at once the dissension and its causes. Nor, however generous, was he willing to forego the present occasion for permanently destroying an influence which he knew hostile to himself and hurtful to the

realm. His was not the generosity of a boy, but of a statesman. Accordingly, as Raoul de Fulke ceased, he took up the word.

"My liege, we have yet an hour good ere the foe can reach the gates. Your brother and mine accompany me. See, they enter! Please you, a few minutes to confer with them; and suffer me, meanwhile, to reason with these noble captains."

Edward paused; but before the open brow of the earl fled whatever suspicion might have crossed the king's mind.

"Be it so, cousin; but remember this—to councillors who can menace me with desertion in such an hour, I concede nothing."

Turning hastily away, he met Clarence and the prelate, midway in the hall, threw his arm caressingly over his brother's shoulder, and, taking the archbishop by the hand, walked with them towards the battlements.

"Well, my friends," said Warwick, "and what would you of the king?"

"The dismissal of all the Woodvilles, except the queen—the revocation of the grants and land accorded to them, to the despoiling the ancient noble—and, but for your presence, we had demanded your recall."

"And, failing these, what your resolve?"

"To depart, and leave Edward to his fate. These granted, we doubt little but that the insurgents will disband. These not granted, we but waste our lives against a multitude whose cause we must approve."

"The cause! But ye know not the real cause," answered Warwick. "I know it; for the sons of the North are familiar to me, and their rising hath deeper meaning than ye deem. What! have they not decoyed

to their head my kinsmen, the heirs of Latimer and Fitzhugh, and bold Coniers, whose steel casque should have circled a wiser brain? Have they not taken my name as their battle-cry? And do ye think this falsehood veils nothing but the simple truth of just complaint?"

"Was their rising, then," asked St. John, in evident surprise, "wholly unauthorized by you?"

"So help me Heaven! If I would resort to arms to redress a wrong, think not that I myself would be absent from the field? No, my lords, friends, and captains—time presses; a few words must suffice to explain what, as yet, may be dark to you. I have letters from Montagu and others, which reached me the same day as the king's, and which clear up the purpose of our misguided countrymen. Ye know well that ever in England, but especially since the reign of Edward III., strange, wild notions of some kind of liberty other than that we enjoy, have floated loose through the land. Among the commons, a half-conscious recollection that the nobles are a different race from themselves feeds a secret rancour and mislike, which, at any fair occasion for riot, shows itself bitter and ruthless —as in the outbreak of Cade and others. And if the harvest fail, or a tax gall, there are never wanting men to turn the popular distress to the ends of private ambition or state design. Such a man has been the true head and front of this commotion."

"Speak you of Robin of Redesdale, now dead?" asked one of the captains.

"He is not dead.* Montagu informs me that the

* The fate of Robin of Redesdale has been as obscure as most of the incidents in this most perplexed part of English history. While some of the chroniclers finish his career according to the report mentioned in the text, Fabyan not only

report was false. He was defeated off York, and retired for some days into the woods; but it is he who has enticed the sons of Latimer and Fitzhugh into the revolt, and resigned his own command to the martial cunning of Sir John Coniers. This Robin of Redesdale is no common man. He hath had a clerkly education —he hath travelled among the Free Towns of Italy— he hath deep purpose in all he doth; and among his projects is the destruction of the nobles here, as it was whilome effected in Florence, the depriving us of all offices and posts, with other changes, wild to think of and long to name."

"And we would have suffered this man to triumph!" exclaimed De Fulke: "we have been to blame."

"Under fair pretence he has gathered numbers, and now wields an army. I have reason to know that, had he succeeded in estranging ye from Edward, and had the king fallen, dead or alive, into his hands, his object would have been to restore Henry of Windsor, but on conditions that would have left king and baron little more than pageants in the state. I knew this man years ago. I have watched him since; and, strange though it may seem to you, he hath much in him that I admire as a subject and should fear were I a king. Brief, thus runs my counsel:—For our sake and the realm's safety we must see this armed multitude dis-

more charitably prolongs his life, but rewards him with the king's pardon; and according to the annals of his ancient and distinguished family (who will pardon, we trust, a licence with one of their ancestry equally allowed by history and romance), as referred to in Wotton's "English Baronetage" (Art. Hilyard), and which probably rests upon the authority of the life of Richard III., in Stowe's "Annals," he is represented as still living in the reign of that king. But the whole account of this famous demagogue in Wotton is, it must be owned, full of historical mistakes.

banded—that done, we must see the grievances they with truth complain of fairly redressed. Think not, my lords, I avenge my own wrongs alone when I go with you in your resolve to banish from the king's councils the baleful influence of the queen's kin. Till that be compassed, no peace for England. As a leprosy, their avarice crawls over the nobler parts of the state, and devours while it sullies. Leave this to me; and, though we will redress ourselves, let us now assist our king!"

With one voice, the unruly officers clamoured their assent to all the earl urged, and expressed their readiness to sally at once from the gates, and attack the rebels.

"But," observed an old veteran, "what are we amongst so many? Here a handful—there an army!"

"Fear not, reverend sir," answered Warwick, with an assured smile; "is not this army in part gathered from my own province of Yorkshire? Is it not formed of men who have eaten of my bread and drank of my cup? Let me see the man who will discharge one arrow at the walls which contain Richard Nevile of Warwick. Now each to your posts—I to the king."

Like the pouring of new blood into a decrepit body seemed the arrival, at that feeble garrison, of the Earl of Warwick. From despair into the certainty of triumph leaped every heart. Already, at the sight of his banner floating by the side of Edward's, the gunner had repaired to his bombard—the archer had taken up his bow—the village itself, before disaffected, poured all its scanty population—women, and age, and children—to the walls. And when the earl joined the king upon the ramparts, he found that able general sanguine and elated, and pointing out to Clarence the natural

defences of the place. Meanwhile, the rebels, no doubt apprised by their scouts of the new aid, had already halted in their march, and the dark swarm might be seen indistinctly undulating, as bees ere they settle, amidst the verdure of the plain.

"Well, cousin," said the king, "have ye brought these Hotspurs to their allegiance?"

"Sire, yes," said Warwick, gravely, "but we have here no force to resist yon army."

"Bring you not succours?" said the king, astonished. "You must have passed through London. Have you left no troops upon the road?"

"I had no time, sir; and London is well-nigh palsied with dismay. Had I waited to collect troops, I might have found a king's head blackening over those gates."

"Well," returned Edward, carelessly, "few or many, one gentleman is more worth than a hundred varlets. 'We are eno' for glory,' as Henry said at Agincourt."

"No, sire; you are too skilful and too wise to believe your boast. These men we cannot conquer—we may disperse them."

"By what spell?"

"By their king's word to redress their complaints."

"And banish my queen?"

"Heaven forbid that man should part those whom God has joined," returned Warwick. "Not my lady, your queen, but my lady's kindred."

"Rivers is dead, and gallant John," said Edward, sadly—"is not that enough for revenge?"

"It is not revenge that we require, but pledges for the land's safety," answered Warwick. "And to be plain, without such a promise these walls may be your tomb."

Edward walked apart, strongly debating within himself. In his character were great contrasts; no man was more frank in common—no man more false when it suited—no man had more levity in wanton love, or more firm affection for those he once thoroughly took to his heart. He was the reverse of grateful for service yielded, yet he was warm in protecting those on whom service was conferred. He was resolved not to give up the Woodvilles, and, after a short self-commune, he equally determined not to risk his crown and life by persevering in resistance to the demand for their downfall. Inly obstinate, outwardly yielding, he concealed his falsehood with his usual soldierly grace.

"Warwick," he said, returning to the earl's side, "you cannot advise me to what is misbeseeming, and therefore, in this strait, I resign my conduct to your hands. I will not unsay to yon mutinous gentlemen what I have already said; but what you judge it right to promise in my name to them, or to the insurgents, I will not suppose that mine honour will refuse to concede. But go not hence, O noblest friend that ever stood by a king's throne!—go not hence till the grasp of your hand assures me that all past unkindness is gone and buried; yea, and by this hand, and while its pressure is warm in mine, bear not too hard on thy king's affection for his lady's kindred."

"Sire," said Warwick, though his generous nature well-nigh melted into weakness, and it was with an effort that he adhered to his purpose—"Sire, if dismissed for awhile, they shall not be degraded. And if it be, on consideration, wise to recall from the family of Woodville your grants of lands and lordships, take from your Warwick—who, rich in his king's love, hath eno' to spare—take the double of what you would re-

call. O, be frank with me—be true—be steadfast, Edward, and dispose of my lands whenever you would content a favourite."

"Not to impoverish thee, my Warwick," answered Edward, smiling, "did I call thee to my aid; for the rest, my revenues as Duke of York are at least mine to bestow. Go now to the hostile camp—go as sole minister and captain-general of this realm—go with all powers and honours a king can give; and when these districts are at peace, depart to our Welsh provinces, as chief judiciary of that principality. Pembroke's mournful death leaves that high post in my gift. It cannot add to your greatness, but it proves to England your sovereign's trust."

"And while that trust is given," said Warwick, with tears in his eyes, "may Heaven strengthen my arm in battle, and sharpen my brain in council. But I play the laggard. The sun wanes westward; it should not go down while a hostile army menaces the son of Richard of York."

The earl rode rapidly away, reached the broad space where his followers still stood, dismounted, but beside their steeds—

"Trumpets advance—pursuivants and heralds go before—Marmaduke, mount! The rest I need not. We ride to the insurgent camp."

CHAPTER III

THE CAMP OF THE REBELS

The rebels had halted about a mile from the town, and were already pitching their tents for the night. It was a tumultuous, clamorous, but not altogether undisciplined array; for Coniers was a leader of singular practice in reducing men into the machinery of war, and where his skill might have failed, the prodigious influence and energy of Robin of Redesdale ruled the passions and united the discordant elements. This last was, indeed, in much worthy the respect in which Warwick held his name. In times more ripe for him, he would have been a mighty demagogue and a successful regenerator. His birth was known but to few; his education and imperious temper made him vulgarly supposed of noble origin; but had he descended from a king's loins, Robert Hilyard had still been the son of the Saxon people. Warwick overrated, perhaps, Hilyard's wisdom; for, despite his Italian experience, his ideas were far from embracing any clear and definite system of democracy. He had much of the frantic levelism and *jacquerie* of his age and land, and could probably not have explained to himself all the changes he desired to effect; but, coupled with his hatred to the nobles, his deep and passionate sympathy with the poor, his heated and fanatical chimeras of a republic, half-political and half-religious,—he had, with no uncommon inconsistency, linked the cause of a dethroned king. For as the Covenanters linked with the Stuarts against the succeeding and more tolerant dynasty, never relinquishing their own anti-monarchic

theories; as in our time, the extreme party on the popular side has leagued with the extreme of the aristocratic, in order to crush the medium policy, as a common foe; so the bold leveller united with his zeal for Margaret the very cause which the House of Lancaster might be supposed the least to favour. He expected to obtain from a sovereign, dependent upon a popular reaction for restoration, great popular privileges. And as the church had deserted the Red Rose for the White, he sought to persuade many of the Lollards, ever ready to show their discontent, that Margaret (in revenge on the hierarchy) would extend the protection they had never found in the previous sway of her husband and Henry V. Possessed of extraordinary craft, and even cunning in secular intrigues—energetic, versatile, bold, indefatigable, and, above all, marvellously gifted with the arts that inflame, stir up, and guide the physical force of masses, Robert Hilyard had been, indeed, the soul and life of the present revolt; and his prudent moderation in resigning the nominal command to those whose military skill and high birth raised a riot into the dignity of rebellion, had given that consistency and method to the rising which popular movements never attain without aristocratic aid.

In the principal tent of the encampment the leaders of the insurrection were assembled.

There was Sir John Coniers, who had married one of the Neviles, the daughter of Fauconberg, Lord High Admiral, but who had profited little by this remote connection with Warwick; for, with all his merit, he was a greedy, grasping man, and he had angered the hot earl in pressing his claims too imperiously. This renowned knight was a tall, gaunt man, whose iron frame sixty winters had not bowed; there, were the

young heirs of Latimer and Fitzhugh, in gay gilded armour and scarlet mantelines; and there, in a plain cuirass, trebly welded, and of immense weight, but the lower limbs left free and unencumbered, in thick leathern hose, stood Robin of Redesdale. Other captains there were, whom different motives had led to the common confederacy. There, might be seen the secret Lollard, hating either Rose, stern and sour, and acknowledging no leader but Hilyard, whom he knew as a Lollard's son; there might be seen the ruined spendthrift, discontented with fortune, and regarding civil war as the cast of a die—death for the forfeiture, lordships for the gain; there, the sturdy Saxon squire, oppressed by the little baron of his province, and rather hopeful to abase a neighbour than dethrone a king, of whom he knew little, and for whom he cared still less; and there, chiefly distinguished from the rest by grizzled beard, upturned moustache, erect mien, and grave, not thoughtful aspect, were the men of a former period—the soldiers who had fought against the Maid of Arc —now without place, station, or hope, in peaceful times, already half robbers by profession, and decoyed to any standard that promised action, pay, or plunder.

The conclave were in high and warm debate.

"If this be true," said Coniers, who stood at the head of the table, his helmet, axe, truncheon, and a rough map of the walls of Olney before him—"if this be true —if our scouts are not deceived—if the Earl of Warwick is in the village, and if his banner float beside King Edward's—I say bluntly, as soldiers should speak, that I have been deceived and juggled!"

"And by whom, Sir Knight and cousin?" said the heir of Fitzhugh, reddening.

"By you, young kinsman, and this hot-mouthed

dare-devil, Robin of Redesdale! Ye assured me, both, that the earl approved the rising—that he permitted the levying yon troops in his name—that he knew well the time was come to declare against the Woodvilles, and that no sooner was an army mustered than he would place himself at its head; and, I say, if this be not true, you have brought these grey hairs into dishonour!"

"And what, Sir John Coniers," exclaimed Robin, rudely, "what honour had your grey hairs till the steel cap covered them? What honour, I say, under lewd Edward and his lusty revellers? You were thrown aside, like a broken scythe, Sir John Coniers! You were forsaken in your rust! Warwick himself, your wife's great kinsman, could do nought in your favour! You stand now, leader of thousands, lord of life and death, master of Edward and the throne! We have done this for you, and you reproach us!"

"And," began the heir of Fitzhugh, encouraged by the boldness of Hilyard, "we had all reason to believe my noble uncle, the Earl of Warwick, approved our emprise. When this brave fellow (pointing to Robin) came to inform me that, with his own eyes, he had seen the waxen effigies of my great kinsman, the hellish misdeed of the queen's witch-dam, I repaired to my Lord Montagu; and, though that prudent courtier refused to declare openly, he let me see that war with the Woodvilles was not unwelcome to him."

"Yet this same Montagu," observed one of the ringleaders, "when Hilyard was well-nigh at the gates of York, sallied out and defeated him, sans ruth, sans ceremony."

"Yes, but he spared my life, and beheaded the dead body of poor Hugh Withers in my stead: for John

Nevile is cunning, and he picks his nuts from the brennen without lesing his own paw. It was not the hour for him to join us, so he beat us civilly, and with discretion. But what hath he done since? He stands aloof while our army swells—while the bull of the Neviles, and the ragged staff of the earl, are the ensigns of our war—and while Edward gnaws out his fierce heart in yon walls of Olney. How say ye, then, that Warwick, even if now in person with the king, is in heart against us? Nay, he may have entered Olney but to capture the tyrant."

"If so," said Coniers, "all is as it should be: but if Earl Warwick, who, though he hath treated me ill, is a stour carle, and to be feared if not loved, join the king, I break this wand, and ye will seek out another captain."

"And a captain shall be found!" cried Robin. "Are we so poor in valour, that when one man leaves us we are headless and undone? What if Warwick so betray us and himself—he brings no forces. And never, by God's blessing, should we separate, till we have redressed the wrongs of our countrymen!"

"Good!" said the Saxon squire, winking, and looking wise,—"not till we have burned to the ground the Baron of Bullstock's castle."

"Not," said a Lollard, sternly—"till we have shortened the purple gown of the churchman—not till abbot and bishop have felt on their backs the whip wherewith they have scourged the godly believer and the humble saint."

"Not," added Robin, "till we have assured bread to the poor man, and the filling of the flesh-pot, and the law to the weak, and the scaffold to the evil-doer."

"All this is mighty well," said, bluntly, Sir Geoffrey

Gates, the leader of the mercenaries, a skilful soldier, but a predatory and lawless bravo—" but who is to pay me and my tall fellows? "

At this pertinent question, there was a general hush of displeasure and disgust.

" For, look you, my masters," continued Sir Geoffrey —" as long as I and my comrades here believed that the rich earl, who hath half England for his provant, was at the head or the tail of this matter, we were contented to wait awhile; but devil a groat hath yet gone into my gipsire, and as for pillage, what is a farm or a homestead! an' it were a church or a castle there might be pickings."

" There is much plate of silver, and a sack or so of marks and royals, in the stronghold of the Baron of Bullstock," quoth the Saxon squire, doggedly hounding on to his revenge.

" You see, my friends," said Coniers, with a smile, and shrugging his shoulders—" that men cannot gird a kingdom with ropes of sand. Suppose we conquer and take captive—nay, or slay King Edward—what then? "

" The Duke of Clarence, male heir to the throne," said the heir of Latimer, " is Lord Warwick's son-in-law, and therefore akin to you, Sir John."

" That is true," observed Coniers, musingly.

" Not ill thought of, sir," said Sir Geoffrey Gates— " and my advice is to proclaim Clarence king, and Warwick lord protector. We have some chance of the angels then."

" Besides," said the heir of Fitzhugh, " our purpose once made clear, it will be hard either for Warwick or Clarence to go against us—harder still for the country not to believe them with us. Bold measures are our wisest councillors."

"Um!" said the Lollard—"Lord Warwick is a good man, and hath never, though his brother be a bishop, abetted the church tyrannies. But as for George of Clarence——"

"As for Clarence," said Hilyard, who saw with dismay and alarm that the rebellion he designed to turn at the fitting hour to the service of Lancaster, might now only help to shift, from one shoulder to the other, the hated dynasty of York—"as for Clarence, he hath Edward's vices, without his manhood." He paused, and seeing that the crisis had ripened the hour for declaring himself, his bold temper pushed at once to its object. "No!" he continued, folding his arms, raising his head, and comprehending the whole council in his keen and steady gaze—"no! lords and gentlemen—since speak I must, in this emergency, hear me calmly. Nothing has prospered in England since we abandoned our lawful king. If we rid ourselves of Edward, let it not be to sink from a harlot-monger to a drunkard. In the Tower pines our true lord, already honoured as a saint. Hear me, I say—hear me out! On the frontiers, an army that keeps Gloucester at bay hath declared for Henry and Margaret. Let us, after seizing Olney, march thither at once, and unite forces. Margaret is already prepared to embark for England. I have friends in London who will attack the Tower, and deliver Henry. To you, Sir John Coniers, in the queen's name, I promise an earldom and the garter. To you, the heirs of Latimer and Fitzhugh, the high posts that beseem your birth; to all of you, knights and captains, just share and allotment in the confiscated lands of the Woodvilles and the Yorkists. To you, brethren," and addressing the Lollards, his voice softened into a meaning accent, that, compelled to worship in secret,

they yet understood, "shelter from your foes and mild laws; and to you, brave soldiers, that pay which a king's coffers alone can supply. Wherefore I say, down with all subject-banners! up with the Red Rose and the Antelope, and long live Henry the Sixth!"

This address, however subtle in its adaptation to the various passions of those assembled, however aided by the voice, spirit, and energy of the speaker, took too much by surprise those present to produce at once its effect.

The Lollards remembered the fires lighted for their martyrs by the House of Lancaster; and though blindly confident in Hilyard, were not yet prepared to respond to his call. The young heir of Fitzhugh, who had, in truth, but taken arms to avenge the supposed wrongs of Warwick, whom he idolized, saw no object gained in the rise of Warwick's enemy—Queen Margaret. The mercenaries called to mind the woful state of Henry's exchequer in the former time. The Saxon squire muttered to himself—"And what the devil is to become of the castle of Bullstock?" But Sir Henry Nevile (Lord Latimer's son), who belonged to that branch of his house which had espoused the Lancaster cause, and who was in the secret councils of Hilyard, caught up the cry, and said—"Hilyard doth not exceed his powers; and he who strikes for the Red Rose, shall carve out his own lordship from the manors of every Yorkist that he slays!" Sir John Coniers hesitated; poor, long neglected, ever enterprising and ambitious, he was dazzled by the proffered bribe—but age is slow to act, and he expressed himself with the measured caution of grey hairs.

"A king's name," said he, "is a tower of strength, especially when marching against a king; but this is a matter for general assent and grave forethought."

Before any other (for ideas did not rush at once to words in those days) found his tongue, a mighty uproar was heard without. It did not syllable itself into distinct sound; it uttered no name—it was such a shout as numbers alone could raise, and to such a shout would some martial leader have rejoiced to charge to battle, so full of depth and fervour, and enthusiasm, and good heart, it seemed, leaping from rank to rank, from breast to breast, from earth to heaven. With one accord the startled captains made to the entrance of the tent, and there they saw, in the broad space before them, enclosed by the tents which were grouped in a wide semicircle,—for the mass of the hardy rebel army slept in the open air, and the tents were but for leaders,—they saw, we say, in that broad space, a multitude kneeling, and in the midst, upon his good steed Saladin, bending graciously down, the martial countenance, the lofty stature, of the Earl of Warwick. Those among the captains who knew him not personally, recognised him by the popular description—by the black war-horse, whose legendary fame had been hymned by every minstrel; by the sensation his appearance had created; by the armorial insignia of his heralds, grouped behind him, and whose gorgeous tabards blazed with his cognizance and quarterings in azure, or, and argent. The sun was slowly setting, and poured its rays upon the bare head of the mighty noble, gathering round it in the hazy atmosphere like a halo. The homage of the crowd to that single form, unarmed, and scarce attended, struck a death-knell to the hopes of Hilyard—struck awe into all his comrades! The presence of that one man seemed to ravish from them, as by magic, a vast army; power, and state, and command, left them suddenly to be absorbed in HIM! Captains, they were

troopless—the wielder of men's hearts was amongst them, and from his barb assumed reign, as from his throne!

"Gads, my life!" said Coniers, turning to his comrades, "we have now, with a truth, the earl amongst us; but, unless he come to lead us on to Olney, I would as lief see the king's provost at my shoulder."

"The crowd separates—he rides this way!" said the heir of Fitzhugh. "Shall we go forth to meet him?"

"Not so!" exclaimed Hilyard, "we are still the leaders of this army; let him find us deliberating on the siege of Olney!"

"Right!" said Coniers; "and if there come dispute, let not the rabble hear it."

The captains re-entered the tent, and in grave silence awaited the earl's coming; nor was this suspense long. Warwick, leaving the multitude in the rear, and taking only one of the subaltern officers in the rebel camp as his guide and usher, arrived at the tent, and was admitted into the council.

The captains, Hilyard alone excepted, bowed with great reverence as the earl entered.

"Welcome, puissant sir, and illustrious kinsman!" said Coniers, who had decided on the line to be adopted —"you are come at last to take the command of the troops raised in your name, and into your hands I resign this truncheon."

"I accept it, Sir John Coniers," answered Warwick, taking the place of dignity; "and since you thus constitute me your commander, I proceed at once to my stern duties. How happens it, knights and gentlemen, that in my absence ye have dared to make my name the pretext of rebellion? Speak thou, my sister's son!"

"Cousin and lord," said the heir of Fitzhugh, redden-

ing but not abashed, "we could not believe but what you would smile on those who have risen to assert your wrongs and defend your life." And he then briefly related the tale of the Duchess of Bedford's waxen effigies, and pointed to Hilyard as the eye-witness.

"And," began Sir Henry Nevile, "you, meanwhile, were banished, seemingly, from the king's court; the dissensions between you and Edward sufficiently the land's talk—the king's vices, the land's shame!"

"Nor did we act without at least revealing our intentions to my uncle and your brother, the Lord Montagu," added the heir of Fitzhugh.

"Meanwhile," said Robin of Redesdale, "the commons were oppressed, the people discontented, the Woodvilles plundering us, and the king wasting our substance on concubines and minions. We have had cause eno' for our rising!"

The earl listened to each speaker in stern silence.

"For all this," he said at last, "you have, without my leave or sanction, levied armed men in my name, and would have made Richard Nevile seem to Europe a traitor, without the courage to be a rebel! Your lives are in my power, and those lives are forfeit to the laws."

"If we have incurred your disfavour from our overzeal for you," said the son of Lord Fitzhugh, touchingly, "take our lives, for they are of little worth." And the young nobleman unbuckled his sword, and laid it on the table.

"But," resumed Warwick, not seeming to heed his nephew's humility, "I, who have ever loved the people of England, and before king and parliament have ever pleaded their cause—I, as captain-general and first officer of these realms, here declare, that whatever motives of ambition or interest may have misled men of

mark and birth, I believe that the commons at least never rise in arms without some excuse for their error. Speak out then, you, their leaders; and, putting aside all that relates to me as the one man, say what are the grievances of which the many would complain."

And now there was silence, for the knights and gentlemen knew little of the complaints of the populace; the Lollards did not dare to expose their oppressed faith, and the squires and franklins were too uneducated to detail the grievances they had felt. But then, the immense superiority of the man of the people at once asserted itself; and Hilyard, whose eye the earl had hitherto shunned, lifted his deep voice. With clear precision, in indignant but not declamatory eloquence, he painted the disorders of the time—the insolent exactions of the hospitals and abbeys—the lawless violence of each petty baron—the weakness of the royal authority in restraining oppression—its terrible power in aiding the oppressor. He accumulated instance on instance of misrule; he showed the insecurity of property; the adulteration of the coin; the burden of the imposts; he spoke of wives and maidens violated—of industry defrauded—of houses forcibly entered—of barns and granaries despoiled—of the impunity of all offenders, if high-born—of the punishment of all complaints, if poor and lowly. "Tell us not," he said, "that this is the necessary evil of the times, the hard condition of mankind. It was otherwise, Lord Warwick, when Edward first swayed; for *you* then made yourself dear to the people by your justice. Still men talk, hereabouts, of the golden rule of Earl Warwick; but since you have been, though great in office, powerless in deed, absent in Calais, or idle at Middleham, England hath been but the plaything of the Woodvilles,

and the king's ears have been stuffed with flattery as with wool. And," continued Hilyard, warming with his subject, and, to the surprise of the Lollards, entering boldly on their master-grievance—" and this is not all. When Edward ascended the throne, there was, if not justice, at least repose, for the persecuted believers who hold that God's word was given to man to read, study, and digest into godly deeds. I speak plainly. I speak of that faith which your great father, Salisbury, and many of the house of York, were believed to favour —that faith which is called the Lollard, and the oppression of which, more than aught else, lost to Lancaster the hearts of England. But of late, the church, assuming the power it ever grasps the most under the most licentious kings (for the sinner prince hath ever the tyrant priest!), hath put in vigour old laws, for the wronging man's thought and conscience;* and we sit at our doors under the shade, not of the vine-tree, but the gibbet. For all these things we have drawn the sword; and if now, you, taking advantage of the love borne to you by the sons of England, push that sword back into the sheath, you, generous, great, and princely, though you be, well deserve the fate that I foresee and can foretell. Yes!" cried the speaker, extending his arms, and gazing fixedly on the proud face of the earl, which was not inexpressive of emotion—" yes! I see you, having deserted the people, deserted by them also in your need—I see you, the dupe of an ungrateful king, stripped of power and honour, an exile and an outlaw; and when you call in vain upon the people, in whose

* The Lollards had greatly contributed to seat Edward on the throne; and much of the subsequent discontent, no doubt, arose from their disappointment, when, as Sharon Turner well expresses it, " his indolence allied him to the Church," and he became " *hereticorum severissimus hostis.*"—*Croyl.*, p. 564.

hearts you now reign, remember, O fallen star, son of the morning! that in the hour of their might you struck down the people's right arm, and paralyzed their power. And now, if you will, let your friends and England's champions glut the scaffolds of your woman-king!"

He ceased—a murmur went round the conclave; every breast breathed hard—every eye turned to Warwick. That mighty statesman mastered the effect which the thrilling voice of the popular pleader produced on him; but at that moment he had need of all his frank and honourable loyalty to remind him that he was there but to fulfil a promise and discharge a trust—that he was the king's delegate, not the king's judge.

"You have spoken, bold men," said he, "as, in an hour when the rights of princes are weighed in one scale, the subject's swords in the other, I, were I king, would wish free men to speak. And now you, Robert Hilyard, and you, gentlemen, hear me, as envoy to King Edward IV. To all of you I promise complete amnesty and entire pardon. His highness believes you misled, not criminal, and your late deeds will not be remembered in your future services. So much for the leaders. Now for the commons. My liege the king is pleased to recall me to the high powers I once exercised, and to increase rather than to lessen them. In his name, I pledge myself to full and strict inquiry into all the grievances Robin of Redesdale hath set forth, with a view to speedy and complete redress. Nor is this all. His highness, laying aside his purpose of war with France, will have less need of imposts on his subjects, and the burdens and taxes will be reduced. Lastly—his grace, ever anxious to content his people, hath most benignly empowered me to promise that, whether or not ye rightly judge the queen's kindred,

they will no longer have part or weight in the king's councils. The Duchess of Bedford, as beseems a lady so sorrowfully widowed, will retire to her own home; and the Lord Scales will fulfil a mission to the court of Spain. Thus, then, assenting to all reasonable demands —promising to heal all true grievances—proffering you gracious pardon—I discharge my duty to king and to people. I pray that these unhappy sores may be healed evermore, under the blessing of God and our patron saint; and in the name of Edward IV., Lord Suzerain of England and of France, I break up this truncheon and disband this army!"

Among those present, this moderate and wise address produced a general sensation of relief; for the earl's disavowal of the revolt took away all hope of its success. But the common approbation was not shared by Hilyard. He sprang upon the table, and, seizing the broken fragments of the truncheon which the earl had snapped as a willow twig, exclaimed—"And thus, in the name of the people, I seize the command that ye unworthily resign! Oh, yes, what fools were yonder drudges of the hard hand and the grimed brow, and the leather jerkin, to expect succour from knight and noble!"

So saying, he bounded from the tent, and rushed towards the multitude at the distance.

"Ye knights and lords, men of blood and birth, were but the tools of a manlier and wiser Cade!" said Warwick, calmly. "Follow me!"

The earl strode from the tent, sprang upon his steed, and was in the midst of the troops with his heralds by his side, ere Hilyard had been enabled to begin the harangue he had intended. Warwick's trumpets sounded to silence; and the earl himself, in his loud

clear voice, briefly addressed the immense audience. Master, scarcely less than Hilyard, of the popular kind of eloquence, which—short, plain, generous, and simple—cuts its way at once through the feelings to the policy, Warwick briefly but forcibly recapitulated to the commons the promises he had made to the captains; and as soon as they heard of taxes removed, the coinage reformed, the corn thrave abolished, the Woodvilles dismissed, and the earl recalled to power, the rebellion was at an end. They answered with a joyous shout his order to disperse and retire to their homes forthwith. But the indomitable Hilyard, ascending a small eminence, began his counter-agitation. The earl saw his robust form and waving hand—he saw the crowd sway towards him; and too well acquainted with mankind to suffer his address, he spurred to the spot, and turning to Marmaduke, said, in a loud voice, "Marmaduke Nevile, arrest that man in the king's name!"

Marmaduke sprang from his steed, and laid his hand on Hilyard's shoulder. Not one of the multitude stirred on behalf of their demagogue. As before the sun recede the stars, all lesser lights had died in the blaze of Warwick's beloved name. Hilyard gripped his dagger, and struggled an instant; but when he saw the awe and apathy of the armed mob, a withering expression of disdain passed over his hardy face.

"Do ye suffer this?" he said. "Do ye suffer me, who have placed swords in your hands, to go forth in bonds, and to the death?"

"The stout earl wrongs no man," said a single voice, and the populace echoed the word.

"Sir, then, I care not for life, since liberty is gone. I yield myself your prisoner."

"A horse for my captive!" said Warwick, laughing

—"and hear me promise you, that he shall go unscathed in goods and in limbs. God wot, when Warwick and the people meet, no victim should be sacrificed! Hurrah for King Edward and fair England!"

He waved his plumed cap as he spoke, and within the walls of Olney was heard the shout that answered.

Slowly the earl and his scanty troop turned the rein: as he receded, the multitude broke up rapidly, and when the moon rose, that camp was a solitude! *

Such, for our nature is ever grander in the individual than the mass—such is the power of man above mankind!

CHAPTER IV

THE NORMAN EARL AND THE SAXON DEMAGOGUE CONFER

On leaving the camp, Warwick rode in advance of his train, and his countenance was serious and full of thought. At length, as a turn in the road hid the little band from the view of the rebels, the earl motioned to Marmaduke to advance with his prisoner. The young Nevile then fell back, and Robin and Warwick rode breast to breast out of hearing of the rest.

"Master Hilyard, I am well content that my brother, when you fell into his hands, spared your life, out of gratitude for the favour you once showed to mine."

* The dispersion of the rebels at Olney is forcibly narrated by a few sentences, graphic from their brief simplicity, in the "Pictorial History of England," Book v., p. 104. "They (Warwick, &c.) repaired in a very friendly manner to Olney, where they found Edward in a most unhappy condition; his friends were dead or scattered, flying for their lives, or hiding themselves in remote places; the insurgents were almost upon him. *A word from Warwick sent the insurgents quietly back to the north.*"

"Your noble brother, my lord," answered Robin, drily—"is, perhaps, not aware of the service I once rendered you. Methinks he spared me rather, because, without me, an enterprise which has shaken the Woodvilles from their roots around the throne, and given back England to the Neviles, had been nipped in the bud!—Your brother is a deep thinker!"

"I grieve to hear thee speak thus of the Lord Montagu. I know that he hath wilier devices than become, in mine eyes, a well-born knight and a sincere man; but he loves his king, and his ends are juster than his means. Master Hilyard, enough of the past evil. Some months after the field of Hexham, I chanced to fall, when alone, amongst a band of roving and fierce Lancastrian outlaws. Thou, their leader, recognising the crest on my helm, and mindful of some slight indulgence once shown to thy strange notions of republican liberty, didst save me from the swords of thy followers: from that time I have sought in vain to mend thy fortunes. Thou hast rejected all mine offers, and I know well that thou hast lent thy service to the fatal cause of Lancaster. Many a time I might have given thee to the law, but gratitude for thy aid in the needful strait, and to speak sooth, my disdain of all individual efforts to restore a fallen house, made me turn my eyes from transgressions, which, once made known to the king, had placed thee beyond pardon. I see now that thou art a man of head and arm to bring great danger upon nations; and though this time Warwick bids thee escape and live,—if once more thou offend, know me only as the king's minister. The debt between us is now cancelled. Yonder lies the path that conducts to the forest. Farewell. Yet stay!—poverty may have led thee into treason."

"Poverty," interrupted Hilyard—"poverty, Lord Warwick, leads men to sympathise with the poor, and therefore I have done with riches." He paused, and his breast heaved. "Yet," he added, sadly, "now that I have seen the cowardice and ingratitude of men, my calling seems over, and my spirit crushed."

"Alas!" said Warwick, "whether man be rich or poor, ingratitude is the vice of men; and you, who have felt it from the mob, menace me with it from a king. But each must carve out his own way through this earth, without over care for applause or blame; and the tomb is the sole judge of mortal memory!"

Robin looked hard in the earl's face, which was dark and gloomy, as he thus spoke, and approaching nearer, he said—"Lord Warwick, I take from you liberty and life the more willingly, because a voice I cannot mistake tells me, and hath long told, that, sooner or later, time will bind us to each other. Unlike other nobles, you have owed your power not so much to lordship, land, and birth, and a king's smile, as to the love you have nobly won; you alone, true knight and princely Christian—you alone, in war, have spared the humble—you alone, stalwart and resistless champion, have directed your lance against your equals, and your order hath gone forth to the fierce of heart—'Never smite the commons!' In peace, you alone have stood up in your haughty parliament for just law or for gentle mercy; your castle hath had a board for the hungry, and a shelter for the houseless; your pride, which hath bearded kings and humbled upstarts, hath never had a taunt for the lowly; and therefore I—son of the people—in the people's name, bless you living, and sigh to ask whether a people's gratitude will mourn you dead! Beware Edward's false smile—beware Clarence's fickle

faith—beware Gloucester's inscrutable wile. Mark, the sun sets!—and while we speak, yon dark cloud gathers over your plumed head."

He pointed to the heavens as he ceased, and a low roll of gathering thunder seemed to answer his ominous warning. Without tarrying for the earl's answer, Hilyard shook the reins of his steed, and disappeared in the winding of the lane through which he took his way.

CHAPTER V

WHAT FAITH EDWARD IV. PURPOSETH TO KEEP WITH EARL AND PEOPLE

Edward received his triumphant envoy with open arms and profuse expressions of gratitude. He exerted himself to the utmost in the banquet that crowned the day, not only to conciliate the illustrious new comers, but to remove from the minds of Raoul de Fulke and his officers all memory of their past disaffection. No gift is rarer or more successful in the intrigues of life than that which Edward eminently possessed—viz., the *hypocrisy of frankness*. Dissimulation is often humble—often polished—often grave, sleek, smooth, decorous; but it is rarely gay and jovial, a hearty laughter, a merry, cordial, boon companion. Such, however, was the felicitous craft of Edward IV.; and, indeed, his spirits were naturally so high—his good humour so flowing—that this joyous hypocrisy cost him no effort. Elated at the dispersion of his foes—at the prospect of his return to his ordinary life of pleasure—there was something so kindly and so winning in his mirth, that he subjugated entirely the fiery

temper of Raoul de Fulke and the steadier suspicions of the more thoughtful St. John. Clarence, wholly reconciled to Edward, gazed on him with eyes swimming with affection, and soon drank himself into uproarious joviality. The archbishop, more reserved, still animated the society by the dry and epigrammatic wit not uncommon to his learned and subtle mind; but Warwick, in vain, endeavoured to shake off an uneasy, ominous gloom. He was not satisfied with Edward's avoidance of discussion upon the grave matters involved in the earl's promise to the insurgents, and his masculine spirit regarded with some disdain, and more suspicion, a levity that he considered ill-suited to the emergence.

The banquet was over, and Edward, having dismissed his other attendants, was in his chamber with Lord Hastings, whose office always admitted him to the wardrobe of the king.

Edward's smile had now left his lip; he paced the room with a hasty stride, and then suddenly opening the casement, pointed to the landscape without, which lay calm and suffused in moonlight.

"Hastings," said he, abruptly, "a few hours since and the earth grew spears! Behold the landscape now!"

"So vanish all the king's enemies!"

"Ay, man, ay—if at the king's word, or before the king's battle-axe; but at a subject's command——. No, I am not a king while another scatters armies in my realm, at his bare will. 'Fore Heaven, this shall not last!"

Hastings regarded the countenance of Edward, changed from affable beauty into terrible fierceness, with reflections suggested by his profound and mourn-

ful wisdom. "How little a man's virtues profit him in the eyes of men!" thought he. "The subject saves the crown, and the crown's wearer never pardons the presumption!"

"You do not speak, sir!" exclaimed Edward, irritated and impatient. "Why gaze you thus on me?"

"*Beau sire,*" returned the favourite, calmly, "I was seeking to discover if your pride spoke, or your nobler nature."

"Tush!" said the king, petulantly—"the noblest part of a king's nature is his pride as king!" Again he strode the chamber, and again halted. "But the earl hath fallen into his own snare—he hath promised in my name what I will not perform. Let the people learn that their idol hath deceived them. He asks me to dismiss from the court the queen's mother and kindred!"

Hastings, who in this went thoroughly with the earl and the popular feeling, and whose only enemies in England were the Woodvilles, replied simply—

"These are cheap terms, sire, for a king's life, and the crown of England."

Edward started, and his eyes flashed that cold, cruel fire, which makes eyes of a light colouring so far more expressive of terrible passions than the quicker and warmer heat of dark orbs. "Think you so, sir? By God's blood, he who proffered them shall repent it in every vein of his body! Harkye, William Hastings de Hastings, I know you to be a deep and ambitious man: but better for you, had you covered that learned brain under the cowl of a mendicant friar, than lent one thought to the councils of the Earl of Warwick."

Hastings, who felt even to fondness the affection which Edward generally inspired in those about his person, and who, far from sympathizing, except in

hate of the Woodvilles, with the earl, saw that beneath that mighty tree no new plants could push into their fullest foliage, reddened with anger at this imperious menace.

"My liege," said he, with becoming dignity and spirit, "if you can thus address your most tried confidant and your lealest friend, your most dangerous enemy is yourself."

"Stay, man," said the king, softening, "I was over warm, but the wild beast within me is chafed. Would Gloucester were here!"

"I can tell you what would be the counsels of that wise young prince, for I know his mind," answered Hastings.

"Ay, he and you love each other well. Speak out."

"Prince Richard is a great reader of Italian lere. He saith that those small states are treasuries of all experience. From that lere Prince Richard would say to you—'where a subject is so great as to be feared, and too much beloved to be destroyed, the king must remember how Tarpeia was crushed.'"

"I remember naught of Tarpeia, and I detest parables."

"Tarpeia, sire (it is a story of old Rome), was crushed under the weight of presents. Oh, my liege," continued Hastings, warming with that interest which an able man feels in his own superior art, "were I king for a year, by the end of it Warwick should be the most unpopular (and therefore the weakest) lord in England!"

"And how, O wise in thine own conceit?"

"*Beau sire*," resumed Hastings, not heeding the rebuke—and strangely enough he proceeded to point out, as the means of destroying the earl's influence,

the very method that the archbishop had detailed to Montagu, as that which would make the influence irresistible and permanent.—"*Beau sire,*" resumed Hastings, "Lord Warwick is beloved by the people because they consider him maltreated; he is esteemed by the people, because they consider him above all bribe; he is venerated by the people, because they believe that in all their complaints and struggles he is independent (he alone) of the king. Instead of love, I would raise envy; for instead of cold countenance I would heap him with grace. Instead of esteem and veneration I would raise suspicion, for I would so knit him to your house that he could not stir hand or foot against you; I would make his heirs your brothers. The Duke of Clarence hath married one daughter—wed the other to Lord Richard. Betroth your young princess to Montagu's son, the representative of all the Neviles. The earl's immense possessions must thus ultimately pass to your own kindred. The earl himself will be no longer a power apart from the throne, but a part of it. The barons will chafe against one who half ceases to be of their order, and yet monopolises their dignities; the people will no longer see in the earl their champion, but a king's favourite and deputy. Neither barons nor people will flock to his banner."

"All this is well and wise," said Edward, musing; "but meanwhile my queen's blood—am I to reign in a solitude?—for look you, Hastings, you know well that, uxorious as fools have deemed me, I had purpose and design in the elevation of new families; I wished to raise a fresh nobility to counteract the pride of the old, and only upon new nobles can a new dynasty rely."

"My Lord, I will not anger you again; but still, for awhile, the queen's relations will do well to retire."

"Good night, Hastings," interrupted Edward, abruptly, "my pillow in this shall be my counsellor."

Whatever the purpose solitude and reflection might ripen in the king's mind, he was saved from immediate decision by news, the next morning, of fresh outbreaks. The commons had risen in Lincolnshire and the county of Warwick; and Anthony Woodville wrote word that, if the king would but show himself among the forces he had raised near Coventry, all the gentry around would rise against the rebellious rabble. Seizing advantage of these tidings, borne to him by his own couriers, and eager to escape from the uncertain soldiery quartered at Olney, Edward, without waiting to consult even with the earl, sprang to horse, and his trumpets were the first signal of departure that he deigned to any one.

This want of ceremony displeased the pride of Warwick; but he made no complaint, and took his place by the king's side, when Edward said, shortly,

"Dear cousin, this is a time that needs all our energies. I ride towards Coventry, to give head and heart to the raw recruits I shall find there: but I pray you and the archbishop to use all means, in this immediate district, to raise fresh troops; for at your name armed men spring up from pasture and glebe, dyke and hedge. Join what troops you can collect in three days with mine at Coventry, and, ere the sickle is in the harvest, England shall be at peace. God speed you! Ho! there, gentlemen, away!—*à franc étrier!*"

Without pausing for reply—for he wished to avoid all questioning, lest Warwick might discover that it was to a Woodville that he was bound—the king put spurs to his horse, and, while his men were yet hurrying to and fro, rode on almost alone, and was a good

mile out of the town before the force led by St. John and Raoul de Fulke, and followed by Hastings, who held no command, overtook him.

"I misthink the king," said Warwick, gloomily, "but my word is pledged to the people, and it shall be kept."

"A man's word is best kept when his arm is the strongest," said the sententious archbishop; "yesterday, you dispersed an army; to-day, raise one!"

Warwick answered not, but, after a moment's thought, beckoned to Marmaduke.

"Kinsman," said he, "spur on, with ten of my little company, to join the king. Report to me if any of the Woodvilles be in his camp near Coventry."

"Whither shall I send the report?"

"To my castle of Warwick!"

Marmaduke bowed his head, and, accustomed to the brevity of the earl's speech, proceeded to the task enjoined him. Warwick next summoned his second squire.

"My lady and her children," said he, "are on their way to Middleham. This paper will instruct you of their progress. Join them with all the rest of my troop, except my heralds and trumpeters; and say that I shall meet them ere long at Middleham."

"It is a strange way to raise an army," said the archbishop, drily, "to begin by getting rid of all the force one possesses!"

"Brother," answered the earl, "I would fain show my son-in-law, who may be the father of a line of kings, that a general may be helpless at the head of thousands, but that a man may stand alone who has the love of a nation."

"May Clarence profit by the lesson! Where is he all this while?"

"Abed," said the stout earl, with a slight accent of disdain; and then, in a softer voice, he added—"youth is ever luxurious. Better the slow man than the false one."

Leaving Warwick to discharge the duty enjoined him, we follow the dissimulating king.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT BEFALLS KING EDWARD ON HIS ESCAPE FROM OLNEY

As soon as Edward was out of sight of the spire of Olney he slackened his speed, and beckoned Hastings to his side.

"Dear Will," said the king, "I have thought over thy counsel, and will find the occasion to make experiment thereof. But, methinks, thou wilt agree with me, that concessions come best from a king who has an army of his own. 'Fore heaven, in the camp of a Warwick I have less power than a lieutenant! Now mark me. I go to head some recruits raised in haste near Coventry. The scene of contest must be in the northern counties. Wilt thou, for love of me, ride night and day, through brake through briar, to Gloucester on the borders? Bid him march, if the Scot will let him, back to York; and if he cannot himself quit the borders, let him send what men can be spared, under thy banner. Failing this, raise through Yorkshire all the men-at-arms thou canst collect. But, above all, see Montagu. Him and his army secure at all hazards. If he demur, tell him his son shall marry his king's daughter, and wear the coronal of a duke. Ha! ha! a large bait for so large

a fish! I see this is no casual outbreak, but a general convulsion of the realm; and the Earl of Warwick must not be the only man to smile or to frown back the angry elements!"

"In this, *beau sire,*" answered Hastings, "you speak as a king and a warrior should, and I will do my best to assert your royal motto—'*Modus et ordo.*' If I can but promise that your highness has for awhile dismissed the Woodville lords, rely upon it, that ere two months I will place under your truncheon an army worthy of the liege lord of hardy England."

"Go, dear Hastings, I trust all to thee!" answered the king.

The nobleman kissed his sovereign's extended hand, closed his visor, and, motioning to his body squire to follow him, disappeared down a green lane, avoiding such broader thoroughfares as might bring him in contact with the officers left at Olney.

In a small village near Coventry, Sir Anthony Woodville had collected about two thousand men, chiefly composed of the tenants and vassals of the new nobility, who regarded the brilliant Anthony as their head. The leaders were gallant and ambitious gentlemen, as they who arrive at fortunes above their birth mostly are—but their vassals were little to be trusted. For, in that day, clanship was still strong, and these followers had been bred in allegiance to Lancastrian lords, whose confiscated estates were granted to the Yorkist favourites. The shout that welcomed the arrival of the king was therefore feeble and lukewarm—and, disconcerted by so chilling a reception, he dismounted, in less elevated spirits than those in which he had left Olney, at the pavilion of his brother-in-law.

The mourning-dress of Anthony, his countenance

saddened by the barbarous execution of his father and brother, did not tend to cheer the king.

But Woodville's account of the queen's grief and horror at the afflictions of her house, and of Jacquetta's indignation at the foul language which the report of her practices put into the popular mouth, served to endear to the king's mind the family that he considered unduly persecuted. Even in the coldest breasts affection is fanned by opposition, and the more the queen's kindred were assailed, the more obstinately Edward clung to them. By suiting his humour, by winking at his gallantries, by a submissive sweetness of temper, which soothed his own hasty moods, and contrasted with the rough pride of Warwick and the peevish fickleness of Clarence, Elizabeth had completely wound herself into the king's heart. And the charming graces, the elegant accomplishments, of Anthony Woodville were too harmonious with the character of Edward, who in all—except truth and honour—was the perfect model of the gay *gentilhomme* of the time, not to have become almost a necessary companionship. Indolent natures may be easily ruled—but they grow stubborn when their comforts and habits are interfered with. And the whole current of Edward's merry easy life seemed to him to lose flow and sparkle if the faces he loved best were banished, or even clouded.

He was yet conversing with Woodville, and yet assuring him that, however he might temporise, he would never abandon the interests of his queen's kindred—when a gentleman entered aghast, to report that the Lords St. John and De Fulke, on hearing that Sir Anthony Woodville was in command of the forces, had, without even dismounting, left the camp, and carried

with them their retainers, amounting to more than half of the little troop that rode from Olney.

"Let them go," said Edward, frowning; "a day shall dawn upon their headless trunks!"

"Oh, my king," said Anthony, now Earl of Rivers, —who, by far the least selfish of his house, was struck with remorse at the penalty Edward paid for his love marriage,—"now that your highness can relieve me of my command, let me retire from the camp. I would fain go a pilgrim to the shrine of Compostella, to pray for my father's sins and my sovereign's weal."

"Let us first see what forces arrive from London," answered the king. "Richard ere long will be on the march from the frontiers, and whatever Warwick resolves, Montagu, whose heart I hold in my hand, will bring his army to my side. Let us wait."

But the next day brought no reinforcements, nor the next, and the king retired betimes to his tent, in much irritation and perplexity; when at the dead of the night he was startled from slumber by the tramp of horses, the sound of horns, the challenge of the sentinels—and, as he sprang from his couch, and hurried on his armour in alarm, the Earl of Warwick abruptly entered. The earl's face was stern, but calm and sad; and Edward's brave heart beat loud as he gazed on his formidable subject.

"King Edward," said Warwick, slowly and mournfully, "you have deceived me! I promised to the commons the banishment of the Woodvilles, and to a Woodville you have flown."

"Your promise was given to rebels, with whom no faith can be held; and I passed from a den of mutiny to the camp of a loyal soldier."

"We will not now waste words, king," answered

Warwick. "Please you to mount, and ride northward. The Scotch have gained great advantages on the marches. The Duke of Gloucester is driven backwards. All the Lancastrians in the North have risen. Margaret of Anjou is on the coast of Normandy,* ready to set sail at the first decisive victory of her adherents."

"I am with you," answered Edward; "and I rejoice to think that at last I may *meet* a foe. Hitherto it seems as if I had been chased by shadows. Now may I hope to grasp the form and substance of danger and of battle."

"A steed prepared for your grace awaits you."

"Whither ride we first?"

"To my castle of Warwick, hard by. At noon tomorrow all will be ready for our northward march."

Edward, by this time, having armed himself, strode from the tent into the open air. The scene was striking—the moon was extremely bright and the sky serene, but around the tent stood a troop of torch-bearers, and the red glare shone luridly upon the steel of the serried horsemen and the banners of the earl, in which the grim white bear was wrought upon an ebon ground, quartered with the dun bull, and crested in gold with the eagle of the Monthermers. Far as the king's eye could reach, he saw but the spears of Warwick; while a confused hum in his own encampment told that the troops Anthony Woodville had collected were not yet marshalled into order—Edward drew back.

"And the Lord Anthony of Scales and Rivers," said he, hesitatingly.

"Choose, king, between the Lord Anthony of Scales

* At this time, Margaret was at Harfleur.—*Will. Wyre.*

and Rivers, and Richard Nevile!" answered Warwick, in a stern whisper.

Edward paused, and at that moment Anthony himself emerged from his tent (which adjoined the king's) in company with the Archbishop of York, who had rode thither in Warwick's train.

"My liege," said that gallant knight, putting his knee to the ground, "I have heard from the archbishop the new perils that await your highness, and I grieve sorely that, in this strait, your councillors deem it meet to forbid me the glory of fighting or falling by your side! I know too well the unhappy odium attached to my house and name in the northern parts, to dispute the policy which ordains my absence from your armies. Till these feuds are over, I crave your royal leave to quit England, and perform my pilgrimage to the sainted shrine of Compostella."

A burning flush passed over the king's face, as he raised his brother-in-law, and clasped him to his bosom.

"Go or stay, as you will, Anthony!" said he, "but let these proud men know that neither time nor absence can tear you from your king's heart. But envy must have its hour! Lord Warwick, I attend you; but, it seems, rather as your prisoner than your liege."

Warwick made no answer: the king mounted, and waved his hand to Anthony. The torches tossed to and fro, the horns sounded, and in a silence, moody and resentful on either part, Edward and his terrible subject rode on to the towers of Warwick.

The next day the king beheld, with astonishment, the immense force that, in a time so brief, the earl had collected round his standard.

From his casement, which commanded that lovely slope on which so many a tourist now gazes with an

eye that seeks to call back the stormy and chivalric past, Edward beheld the earl on his renowned black charger, reviewing the thousands that, file on file, and rank on rank, lifted pike and lance in the cloudless sun.

"After all," muttered the king, "I can never make a new noble a great baron! And if in peace a great baron overshadows the throne, in time of war a great baron is a throne's bulwark! Gramercy, I had been mad to cast away such an army—an army fit for a king to lead! They serve Warwick now—but Warwick is less skilful in the martial art than I—and soldiers, like hounds, love best the most dexterous huntsman."

CHAPTER VII

HOW KING EDWARD ARRIVES AT THE CASTLE OF MIDDLEHAM

On the ramparts of feudal Middleham, in the same place where Anne had confessed to Isabel the romance of her childish love, again the sisters stood, awaiting the coming of their father and the king. They had only, with their mother, reached Middleham two days before, and the preceding night an advanced guard had arrived at the castle to announce the approach of the earl with his royal comrade and visitor. From the heights, already, they beheld the long array winding in glorious order towards the mighty pile.

"Look!" exclaimed Isabel, "look! already methinks I see the white steed of Clarence. Yes! it is he! it is my George—my husband! The banner borne before, shows his device."

"Ah! happy Isabel!" said Anne, sighing, "what rapture to await the coming of him one loves!"

"My sweet Anne," returned Isabel, passing her arm tenderly round her sister's slender waist, "when thou hast conquered the vain folly of thy childhood, thou wilt find a Clarence of thine own. And yet," added the young duchess, smiling, "it must be the opposite of a Clarence, to be to thy heart what a Clarence is to mine. I love George's gay humour—thou lovest a melancholy brow. I love that charming weakness which supples to my woman will—thou lovest a proud nature that may command thine own. I do not respect George less, because I know my mind stronger than his own; but thou (like my gentle mother) wouldst have thy mate, lord and chief in all things, and live from his life as the shadow from the sun. But where left you our mother?"

"In the oratory, at prayer!"

"She has been sad of late."

"The dark times darken her; and she ever fears the king's falseness or caprice will stir the earl up to some rash emprise. My father's letter, brought last night to her, contains something that made her couch sleepless."

"Ha!" exclaimed the duchess, eagerly, "my mother confides in thee more than me. Saw you the letter?"

"No."

"Edward will make himself unfit to reign," said Isabel, abruptly. "The barons will call on him to resign; and then—and *then*, Anne—sister Anne,—Warwick's daughters cannot be born to be simple subjects!"

"Isabel, God temper your ambition! Oh! curb it—crush it down! Abuse not your influence with Clarence. Let not the brother aspire to the brother's crown."

"Sister, a king's diadem covers all the sins schemed in the head that wins it!"

As the duchess spoke, her eyes flashed and her form dilated. Her beauty seemed almost terrible.

The gentle Anne gazed and shuddered; but ere she found words to rebuke, the lovely shape of the countess-mother was seen moving slowly towards them. She was dressed in her robes of state to receive her kingly guest; the vest fitting high to the throat, where it joined the ermine tippet, and thickly sown with jewels; the sleeves tight, with the second or over sleeves, that, loose and large, hung pendant and sweeping even to the ground; and the gown, velvet of cramousin, trimmed with ermine, made a costume not less graceful than magnificent, and which, where compressed, set off the exquisite symmetry of a form still youthful, and where flowing, added majesty to a beauty naturally rather soft and feminine than proud and stately. As she approached her children, she looked rather like their sister than their mother, as if Time, at least, shrunk from visiting harshly one for whom such sorrows were reserved.

The face of the countess was so sad in its aspect of calm and sweet resignation, that even the proud Isabel was touched; and kissing her mother's hand, she asked, "If any ill tidings preceded her father's coming?"

"Alas, my Isabel, the times themselves are bad tidings! Your youth scarcely remembers the days when brother fought against brother, and the son's sword rose against the father's breast. But I, recalling them, tremble to hear the faintest murmur that threatens a civil war." She paused, and forcing a smile to her lips, added, "Our woman fears must not, however, sadden our lords with an unwelcome countenance; for men, returning to their hearths, have a right to a wife's smile; and so, Isabel, thou and I, wives both,

must forget the morrow in to-day. Hark! the trumpets sound near and nearer—let us to the hall."

Before, however, they had reached the castle, a shrill blast rang at the outer gate. The portcullis was raised; the young Duke of Clarence, with a bridegroom's impatience, spurred alone through the gloomy arch, and Isabel, catching sight of his countenance, lifted towards the ramparts, uttered a cry and waved her hand. Clarence heard and saw, leapt from his steed, and had clasped Isabel to his breast, almost before Anne or the countess had recognised the new comer.

Isabel, however, always stately, recovered in an instant from the joy she felt at her lord's return, and gently escaping his embrace, she glanced with a blush towards the battlements crowded with retainers; Clarence caught and interpreted the look.

"Well, *belle mère*," he said, turning to the countess —"and if yon faithful followers *do* witness with what glee a fair bride inspires a returning bridegroom—is there cause for shame in this check of damascene?"

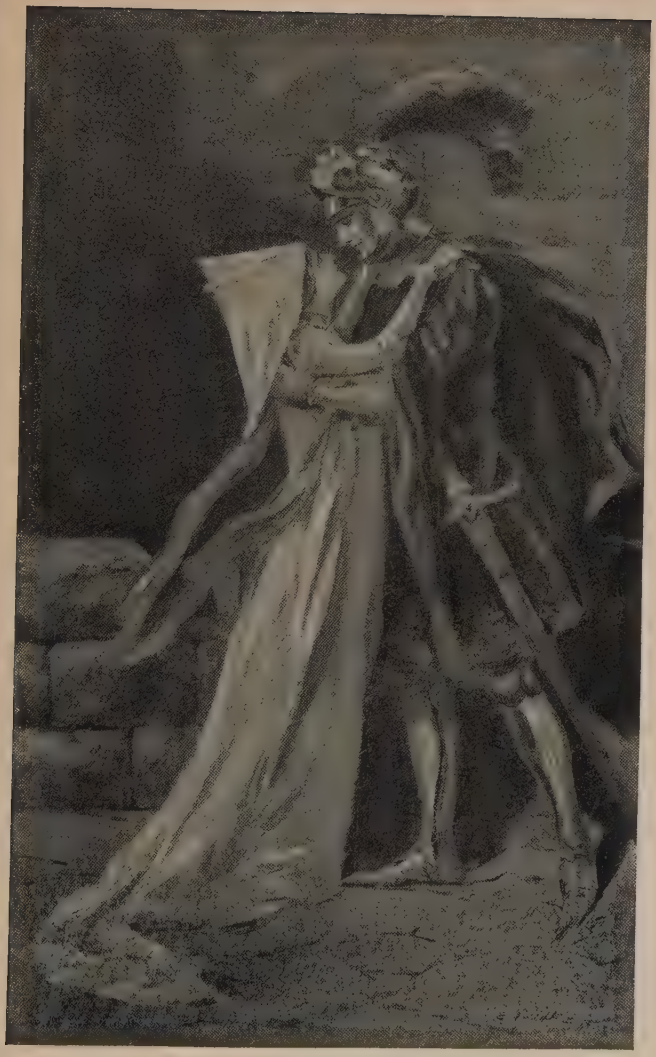
"Is the king still with my father?" asked Isabel hastily, and interrupting the countess's reply.

"Surely yes; and hard at hand. And pardon me that I forgot, dear lady, to say that my royal brother has announced his intention of addressing the principal officers of the army in Middleham Hall. This news gave me fair excuse for hastening to you and Isabel."

"All is prepared for his highness," said the countess, "save our own homage. We must quicken our steps —come, Anne."

The countess took the arm of the younger sister, while the duchess made a sign to Clarence,—he lingered behind, and Isabel, drawing him aside, asked—

"Is my father reconciled to Edward?"



Clarence clasped Isabel to his breast.

"No—nor Edward to him."

"Good! The king has no soldiers of his own amidst yon armed train?"

"Save a few of Anthony Woodville's recruits—none. Raoul de Fulke and St. John have retired to their towers in sullen dudgeon. But have you no softer questions for my return, *bella mia?*"

"Pardon me—many—my *king*."

"*King!*"

"What other name should the successor of Edward IV. bear?"

"Isabel," said Clarence, in great emotion, "what is it you would tempt me to? Edward IV. spares the life of Henry VI., and shall Edward IV.'s brother conspire against his own?"

"Saints forefend!" exclaimed Isabel—"can you so wrong my honest meaning? O George! can you conceive that your wife—Warwick's daughter—harbours the thought of murder? No! surely the career before you seems plain and spotless! Can Edward reign? Deserted by the barons, and wearing away even my father's long-credulous love; odious! except in luxurious and unwarlike London, to all the commons—how reign? What other choice left? none—save Henry of Lancaster or George of York."

"Were it so," said the weak duke, and yet he added, falteringly—"believe me, Warwick meditates no such changes in my favour."

"Time is a rapid ripener," answered Isabel—"but hark, they are lowering the drawbridge for our guests."

CHAPTER VIII

THE ANCIENTS RIGHTLY GAVE TO THE GODDESS OF ELOQUENCE A CROWN

The lady of Warwick stood at the threshold of the porch, which, in the inner side of the broad quadrangle, admitted to the apartments used by the family; and, heading the mighty train that, line after line, emerged through the grim jaws of the arch, came the earl on his black destrier, and the young king.

Even where she stood, the anxious *Chatelaine* beheld the moody and gloomy air with which Edward glanced around the strong walls of the fortress, and up to the battlements that bristled with the pikes and sallets of armed men, who looked on the pomp below, in the silence of military discipline.

"Oh, Anne!" she whispered to her youngest daughter, who stood beside her—"what are women worth in the strife of men? Would that our smiles could heal the wounds which a taunt can make in a proud man's heart!"

Anne, affected and interested by her mother's words, and with a secret curiosity to gaze upon the man who ruled on the throne of the prince she loved, came nearer and more in front, and suddenly, as he turned his head, the king's regard rested upon her intent eyes and blooming face.

"Who is that fair donzell, cousin of Warwick?" he asked.

"My daughter, sire."

"Ah! your youngest!—I have not seen her since she was a child."

Edward reined in his charger, and the earl threw himself from his selle, and held the king's stirrup to dismount. But he did so with a haughty and unsmiling visage. "I would be the first, sire," said he, with a slight emphasis, and as if excusing to himself his condescension—"to welcome to Middleham the son of Duke Richard."

"And your suzerain, my lord earl," added Edward, with no less proud a meaning, and leaning his hand lightly on Warwick's shoulder, he dismounted slowly. "Rise, lady," he said, raising the countess, who knelt at the porch—"and you too, fair demoiselle. Pardieu,—we envy the knee that hath knelt to *you.*" So saying, with royal graciousness, he took the countess's hand, and they entered the hall as the musicians, in the gallery raised above, rolled forth their stormy welcome.

The archbishop, who had followed close to Warwick and the king, whispered now to his brother—

"Why would Edward address the captains?"

"I know not."

"He hath made himself familiar with many in the march."

"Familiarity with a steel casque better becomes a king than waisall with a greasy flat-cap."

"You do not fear lest he seduce from the White Bear its retainers?"

"As well fear that he can call the stars from their courses around the sun."

While these words were interchanged, the countess conducted the king to a throne-chair, raised upon the dais, by the side of which were placed two seats of state, and, from the dais, at the same time, advanced the Duke and Duchess of Clarence. The king prevented their kneeling, and kissed Isabel slightly and

gravely on the forehead. "Thus, noble lady, I greet the entrance of the Duchess of Clarence into the royalty of England."

Without pausing for reply, he passed on and seated himself on the throne, while Isabel and her husband took possession of the state chairs on either hand. At a gesture of the king's, the countess and Anne placed themselves on seats less raised, but still upon the dais. But now as Edward sat, the hall grew gradually full of lords and knights who commanded in Warwick's train, while the earl and the archbishop stood mute in the centre, the one armed *cap-à-pie*, leaning on his sword, the other with his arms folded in his long robes.

The king's eye, clear, steady, and majestic, roved round that martial audience, worthy to be a monarch's war-council, and not one of whom marched under a monarch's banner! Their silence, their discipline, the splendour of their arms, the greater splendour of their noble names, contrasted painfully with the little mutinous camp of Olney, and the surly, untried recruits of Anthony Woodville. But Edward, whose step, whose form, whose aspect, proclaimed the man conscious of his rights to be lord of all, betrayed not to those around him the kingly pride, the lofty grief, that swelled within his heart. Still seated, he raised his left hand to command silence; with the right he replaced his plumed cap upon his brow.

"Lords and gentlemen," he said (arrogating to himself at once, as a thing of course, that gorgeous following), "we have craved leave of our host to address to you some words—words which it pleases a king to utter, and which may not be harsh to the ears of a loyal subject. Nor will we, at this great current of unsteady fortune, make excuse, noble ladies, to you, that we

speak of war to knighthood, which is ever the sworn defender of the daughter and the wife:—the daughters and the wife of our cousin, Warwick, have too much of hero-blood in their blue veins to grow pale at the sight of heroes. Comrades in arms! thus far towards our foe upon the frontiers we have marched, without a sword drawn or an arrow launched from an archer's bow. We believe that a blessing settles on the head of a true king, and that the trumpet of a good angel goes before his path, announcing the victory which awaits him. Here, in the hall of the Earl of Warwick, our captain-general, we thank you for your cheerful countenance, and your loyal service; and here, as befits a king, we promise to you those honours *a king alone* worthily can bestow." He paused, and his keen eye glanced from chief to chief as he resumed: "We are informed that certain misguided and traitor lords have joined the Rose of Lancaster. Whoever so doth is attainted, life and line, evermore! His lands and dignities are forfeit to enrich and to ennoble the men who strike for me. Heaven grant I may have foes eno' to reward all my friends! To every baron who owns Edward IV. king (ay, and not king in name—king in banquet and in bower—but leader and captain in the war), I trust to give a new barony—to every knight a new knight's fee—to every yeoman a hyde of land—to every soldier a year's pay. What more I can do, let it be free for any one to suggest—for my domains of York are broad, and my heart is larger still!"

A murmur of applause and reverence went round. Vowed, as those warriors were, to the earl, they felt that A MONARCH was amongst them.

"What say you, then? We are ripe for glory. Three days will we halt at Middleham, guest to our noble subject."

"Three days, sire!" repeated Warwick, in a voice of surprise.

"Yes; and this, fair cousin, and ye, lords and gentlemen, is my reason for the delay. I have despatched Sir William, Lord de Hastings, to the Duke of Gloucester, with command to join us here—(the archbishop started, but instantly resumed his earnest placid aspect)—to the Lord Montagu, Earl of Northumberland, to muster all the vassals of our shire of York. As three streams that dash into the ocean, shall our triple army meet and rush to the war. Not even, gentlemen, not even to the great Earl of Warwick will Edward IV. be so beholden for roiaulme and renown, as to march but a companion to the conquest. If ye were raised in Warwick's name, not mine—why, be it so! I envy him such friends; but I will have an army of mine own, to show mine English soldiery how a Plantagenet battles for his crown. Gentlemen, ye are dismissed to your repose. In three days we march! and if any of you know in these fair realms the man, be he of York or Lancaster, more fit to command brave subjects than he who now addresses you, I say to that man—turn rein, and leave us! Let tyrants and cowards enforce reluctant service, *my* crown was won by the hearts of my people! Girded by those hearts, let me reign—or, mourned by them, let me fall! So God and St. George favour me as I speak the truth!"

And as the king ceased, he uncovered his head, and kissed the cross of his sword. A thrill went through the audience. Many were there, disaffected to his person, and whom Warwick's influence alone could have roused to arms; but, at the close of an address, spirited and royal in itself, and borrowing thousandfold effect by the voice and mien of the speaker, no

feeling but that of enthusiastic loyalty, of almost tearful admiration, was left in those steel-clad breasts.

As the king lifted on high the cross of his sword, every blade leapt from its scabbard, and glittered in the air: and the dusty banners in the hall waved, as to a mighty blast, when, amidst the rattle of armour, burst forth the universal cry—"Long live Edward IV.! Long live the king!"

The sweet countess, even amidst the excitement, kept her eyes anxiously fixed on Warwick, whose countenance, however, shaded by the black plumes of his casque, though the visor was raised, revealed nothing of his mind. Her daughters were more powerfully affected; for Isabel's intellect was not so blinded by her ambition, but that the kingliness of Edward forced itself upon her with a might and solemn weight, which crushed, for the moment, her aspiring hopes—Was *this* the man unfit to reign? *This* the man voluntarily to resign a crown? *This* the man whom George of Clarence, without fratricide, could succeed? No!—*there,* spoke the soul of the First and the Third Edward! There, shook the mane, and there, glowed the eye, of the indomitable lion of the august Plantagenets! And the same conviction, rousing softer and holier sorrow, sat on the heart of Anne: she saw, as for the first time, clearly before her, the awful foe with whom her ill-omened and beloved prince had to struggle for his throne. In contrast beside that form, in the prime of manly youth—a giant in its strength, a god in its beauty—rose the delicate shape of the melancholy boy who, afar in exile, coupled in his dreams the sceptre and the bride! By one of those mysteries which magnetism seeks to explain, in the strong intensity of her emotions, in the tremor of her shaken nerves, fear

seemed to grow prophetic. A stream as of blood rose up from the dizzy floors. The image of her young prince, bound and friendless, stood before the throne of that warrior-king. In the waving glitter of the countless swords raised on high, she saw the murderous blade against the boy-heir of Lancaster descend—descend! Her passion, her terror, at the spectre which fancy thus evoked, seized and overcame her; and ere the last hurrah sent its hollow echo to the raftered roof, she sank from her chair to the ground, hueless and insensible as the dead.

The king had not without design permitted the unwonted presence of the women in this warlike audience. Partly because he was not unaware of the ambitious spirit of Isabel, partly because he counted on the affection shown to his boyhood by the countess, who was said to have singular influence over her lord, but principally because in such a presence he trusted to avoid all discussion and all questioning, and to leave the effect of his eloquence, in which he excelled all his contemporaries, Gloucester alone excepted, single and unimpaired; and, therefore, as he rose, and returned with a majestic bend the acclamation of the warriors, his eye now turned towards the chairs where the ladies sat, and he was the first to perceive the swoon of the fair Anne.

With the tender grace that always characterised his service to women, he descended promptly from his throne, and raised the lifeless form in his stalwart arms; and Anne, as he bent over her, looked so strangely lovely, in her marble stillness, that even in that hour a sudden thrill shot through a heart always susceptible to beauty, as the harp-string to the breeze.

"It is but the heat, lady," said he to the alarmed

countess, "and let me hope that interest which my fair kinswoman may take in the fortunes of Warwick and of York, *hitherto* linked together——"

"May they ever be so!" said Warwick, who, on seeing his daughter's state, had advanced hastily to the dais; and, moved by the king's words, his late speech, the evils that surrounded his throne, the gentleness shown to the beloved Anne, forgetting resentment and ceremony alike, he held out his mailed hand. The king, as he resigned Anne to her mother's arms, grasped with soldierly frankness, and with the ready wit of the cold intellect which reigned beneath the warm manner, the hand thus extended, and holding still that iron gauntlet in his own ungloved and jewelled fingers, he advanced to the verge of the dais, to which, in the confusion occasioned by Anne's swoon, the principal officers had crowded, and cried aloud—

"Behold! Warwick and Edward, thus hand in hand, as they stood when the clarions sounded the charge at Touton! and that link, what swords, forged on a mortal's anvil, can rend or sever?"

In an instant every knee there knelt; and Edward exultingly beheld, that what before had been allegiance to the earl was now only homage to the king!

CHAPTER IX

WEDDED CONFIDENCE AND LOVE—THE EARL AND THE PRELATE—THE PRELATE AND THE KING—SCHEMES—WILES—AND THE BIRTH OF A DARK THOUGHT DESTINED TO ECLIPSE A SUN

While, preparatory to the banquet, Edward, as was then the daily classic custom, relaxed his fatigues, mental or bodily, in the hospitable bath, the archbishop sought the closet of the earl.

"Brother," said he, throwing himself with some petulance into the only chair the room, otherwise splendid, contained—"when you left me, to seek Edward in the camp of Anthony Woodville, what was the understanding between us?"

"I know of none," answered the earl, who, having doffed his armour, and dismissed his squires, leaned thoughtfully against the wall, dressed for the banquet, with the exception of the short surcoat, which lay glittering on the tabouret.

"You know of none? Reflect! Have you brought hither Edward as a guest or as a prisoner?"

The earl knit his brows—"A prisoner, archbishop?"

The prelate regarded him with a cold smile.

"Warwick, you, who would deceive no other man, now seek to deceive yourself." The earl drew back, and his hardy countenance grew a shade paler. The prelate resumed—"You have carried Edward from his camp, and severed him from his troops; you have placed him in the midst of your own followers—you have led him, chafing and resentful all the way, to this impregnable keep; and you now pause, amazed by the

grandeur of your captive; a man who leads to his home a tiger—a spider who has entangled a hornet in its web!——"

"Nay, reverend brother," said the earl calmly, "ye churchmen never know what passes in the hearts of those who feel and do not scheme. When I learned that the king had fled to the Woodvilles—that he was bent upon violating the pledge given in his name to the insurgent commons; I vowed that he should redeem my honour and his own, or that for ever I would quit his service. And here, within these walls which sheltered his childhood, I trusted, and trust still, to make one last appeal to his better reason."

"For all that, men now, and history hereafter, will consider Edward as your captive."

"To living men, my words and deeds can clear themselves; and as for history, let clerks and scholars fool themselves in the lies of parchment! He who has *acted* history, despises the gownsmen who sit in cloistered ease, and write about what they know not." The earl paused, and then continued—"I confess, however, that I have had a scheme. I have wished to convince the king how little his mushroom lords can bestead him in the storm; and that he holds his crown only from his barons and his people."

"That is, from the Lord Warwick!"

"Perhaps I *am* the personation of both seignorie and people; but I design this solely for his welfare. Ah, the gallant prince—how well he bore himself to-day!"

"Ay, when stealing all hearts from thee to him."

"And, *Vive Dieu,* I never loved him so well as when he did! Methinks it was for a day like this that I reared his youth and achieved his crown. Oh, priest—priest, thou mistakest me. I am rash, hot, haughty, hasty;

and I love not to bow my knees to a man because they call him king, if his life be vicious, and his word be false. But, could Edward be ever as to-day, then indeed should I hail a sovereign whom a baron may reverence and a soldier serve!"

Before the archbishop could reply, the door gently opened, and the countess appeared. Warwick seemed glad of the interruption; he turned quickly—"And how fares my child?"

"Recovered from her strange swoon, and ready to smile at thy return. Oh, Warwick, thou art reconciled to the king?"

"That glads thee, sister?" said the archbishop.

"Surely. Is it not for my lord's honour?"

"May he find it so!" said the prelate, and he left the room.

"My priest-brother is chafed," said the earl smiling. "Pity he was not born a trader, he would have made a shrewd hard bargain.—Verily, our priests burn the Jews out of envy! Ah, *m'amie*, how fair thou art to-day. Methinks even Isabel's cheek less blooming." And the warrior drew the lady towards him, and smoothed her hair, and tenderly kissed her brow. "My letter vexed thee, I know, for thou lovest Edward, and blamest me not for my love to him. It is true that he hath paltered with me, and that I had stern resolves, not against his crown, but to leave him to his fate, and in these halls to resign my charge. But while he spoke, and while he looked, methought I saw his mother's face, and heard his dear father's tones, and the past rushed over me, and all wrath was gone. Sonless myself, why would he not be my son?" The earl's voice trembled, and the tears stood in his dark eyes.

"Speak thus, dear lord, to Isabel, for I fear her overvaulting spirit——"

"Ah, had Isabel been his wife!" he paused and moved away. Then, as if impatient to escape the thoughts that tended to an ungracious recollection, he added—"and now, sweetheart, these slight fingers have ofttimes buckled on my mail, let them place on my breast this badge of St. George's chivalry; and, if angry thoughts return, it shall remind me that the day on which I wore it first, Richard of York said to his young Edward, 'Look to that star, boy, if ever, in cloud and trouble, thou wouldst learn what safety dwells in the heart which never knew deceit.'"

During the banquet, the king, at whose table sat only the Duke of Clarence and the earl's family, was gracious as day to all, but especially to the Lady Anne, attributing her sudden illness to some cause not unflattering to himself; her beauty, which somewhat resembled that of the queen, save that it had more advantage of expression and of youth, was precisely of the character he most admired. Even her timidity, and the reserve with which she answered him, had their charms; for, like many men, themselves of imperious nature and fiery will, he preferred even imbecility in a woman to whatever was energetic or determined; and hence perhaps his indifference to the more dazzling beauty of Isabel. After the feast, the numerous demoiselles, high-born and fair, who swelled the more than regal train of the countess, were assembled in the long gallery, which was placed in the third story of the castle and served for the principal state apartment. The dance began; but Isabel excused herself from the pavon, and the king led out the reluctant and melancholy Anne.

The proud Isabel, who had never forgiven Edward's slight to herself, resented deeply his evident admiration

of her sister, and conversed apart with the archbishop, whose subtle craft easily drew from her lips confessions of an ambition higher even than his own. He neither encouraged nor dissuaded; he thought there were things more impossible than the accession of Clarence to the throne, but he was one who never plotted,—save for himself and for the church.

As the revel waned, the prelate approached the earl, who, with that remarkable courtesy which charmed those below his rank, and contrasted with his haughtiness to his peers, had well played amongst his knights the part of host, and said, in a whisper, "Edward is in a happy mood—let us lose it not. Will you trust me to settle all differences, ere he sleep? Two proud men never can agree without a third of a gentler temper."

"You are right," said Warwick, smiling, "yet the danger is, that I should rather concede too much, than be too stubborn. But look you; all I demand is, satisfaction to mine own honour, and faith to the army I disbanded in the king's name."

"*All!*" muttered the archbishop, as he turned away, "but that *all* is everything to provoke quarrel for you, and nothing to bring power to *me!*"

The earl and the archbishop attended the king to his chamber, and after Edward was served with the parting refection, or livery, the earl said, with his most open smile—"Sire, there are yet affairs between us; whom will you confer with—me or the archbishop?"

"Oh! the archbishop, by all means, fair cousin," cried Edward, no less frankly; "for if you and I are left alone, the Saints help both of us!—when flint and steel meet, fire flies, and the house may burn."

The earl half smiled at the candour—half sighed at

the levity—of the royal answer, and silently left the room. The king, drawing round him his loose dressing-robe, threw himself upon the gorgeous coverlid of the bed, and lying at lazy length, motioned to the prelate to seat himself at the foot. The archbishop obeyed. Edward raised himself on his elbow, and, by the light of seven gigantic tapers, set in sconces of massive silver, the priest and the king gravely gazed on each other, without speaking.

At last Edward, bursting into his hale, clear, silvery laugh, said, "Confess, dear sir and cousin—confess that we are like two skilful masters of Italian fence, each fearing to lay himself open by commencing the attack."

"Certes," quoth the archbishop, "your grace overestimates my vanity, in opining that I deemed myself equal to so grand a duello. If there were dispute between us, I should only win by baring my bosom."

The king's bow-like lip curved with a slight sneer, quickly replaced by a serious and earnest expression —"Let us leave word-making, and to the point, George. Warwick is displeased because I will not abandon my wife's kindred; you, with more reason, because I have taken from your hands the chancellor's great seal——"

"For myself, I humbly answer that your grace errs. I never coveted other honours than those of the church."

"Ay," said Edward, keenly examining the young prelate's smooth face, "is it so? Yes, now I begin to comprehend thee. What offence have I given to the church? Have I suffered the law too much to sleep against the Lollards? If so, blame Warwick."

"On the contrary, sire, unlike other priests, I have

ever deemed that persecution heals no schism. Blow not dying embers. Rather do I think of late that too much severity hath helped to aid, by Lollard bows and pikes, the late rising. My lady, the queen's mother, unjustly accused of witchcraft, hath sought to clear herself, and perhaps too zealously, in exciting your grace against that invisible giant—ycleped heresy."

"Pass on," said Edward. "It is not then indifference to the ecclesia that you complain of. Is it neglect of the ecclesiastic? Ha! ha! you and I, though young, know the colours that make up the patchwork world. Archbishop, I love an easy life; if your brother and his friends will but give me *that,* let them take all else. Again, I say, to the point,—I cannot banish my lady's kindred, but I will bind your house still more to mine. I have a daughter, failing male issue, the heiress to my crown. I will betroth her to your nephew, my beloved Montagu's son. They are children yet, but their ages not unsuited. And when I return to London, young Nevile shall be Duke of Bedford, a title hitherto reserved to the royal race.* Let that be a pledge of peace between the queen's mother, bearing the same honours and the house of Nevile, to which they pass."

The cheek of the archbishop flushed with proud pleasure; he bowed his head, and Edward, ere he could answer, went on,—"Warwick is already so high that, *pardie,* I have no other step to give him, save my throne itself, and, God's truth, I would rather be Lord Warwick than King of England! But for you—listen—our only English cardinal is old and sickly—

* And indeed there was but one Yorkist duke then in England out of the royal family—viz., the young boy, Buckingham, who afterwards vainly sought to bend the Ulysses bow of Warwick against Richard III.

whenever he pass to Abraham's bosom, who but you should have the suffrage of the holy college? Thou knowest that I am somewhat in the good favour of the sovereign pontiff. Command me to the utmost. Now, George, are we friends?"

The archbishop kissed the gracious hand extended to him, and, surprised to find, as by magic, all his schemes frustrated by sudden acquiescence in the objects of them all, his voice faltered with real emotion as he gave vent to his gratitude. But abruptly he checked himself, his brow lowered, and with a bitter remembrance of his brother's plain, blunt sense of honour, he said, "Yet, alas, my liege, in all this there is nought to satisfy our stubborn host."

"By dear Saint George and my father's head!" exclaimed Edward, reddening, and starting to his feet, "what would the man have?"

"You know," answered the archbishop, "that Warwick's pride is only roused when he deems his honour harmed. Unhappily, as he thinks, by your grace's full consent, he pledged himself to the insurgents of Olney to the honourable dismissal of the lords of the Woodville race. And unless this be conceded, I fear me that all else he will reject, and the love between ye can be but hollow!"

Edward took but three strides across the chamber, and then halted opposite the archbishop, and laid both hands on his shoulders, as, looking him full in the face, he said, "Answer me frankly, am I a prisoner in these towers, or not?"

"Not, sire."

"You palter with me, priest. I have been led hither against my will. I am almost without an armed retinue. I am at the earl's mercy. This chamber

might be my grave, and this couch my bed of death."

"Holy Mother! Can you think so of Warwick? Sire, you freeze my blood."

"Well, then, if I refuse to satisfy Warwick's pride, and disdain to give up loyal servants to rebel insolence, what will Warwick do? Speak out, archbishop."

"I fear me, sire, that he will resign all office, whether of peace or war. I fear me that the goodly army now at sleep within and around these walls will vanish into air, and that your highness will stand alone amidst new men, and against the disaffection of the whole land!"

Edward's firm hand trembled. The prelate continued, with a dry, caustic smile—

"Sire, Sir Anthony Woodville, now Lord Rivers, has relieved you of all embarrassment; no doubt, my Lord Dorset and his kinsmen will be chevaliers enough to do the same. The Duchess of Bedford will but suit the decorous usage to retire awhile into privacy, to mourn her widowhood. And when a year is told, if these noble persons reappear at court, your word and the earl's will at least have been kept."

"I understand thee," said the king, half laughing; "but I have my pride as well as Warwick. To concede this point is to humble the conceder."

"I have thought how to soothe all things, and without humbling either party. Your grace's mother is dearly beloved by Warwick, and revered by all. Since your marriage she hath lived secluded from all state affairs. As so nearly akin to Warwick—so deeply interested in your grace—she is a fitting mediator in all disputes. Be they left to her to arbitrate."

"Ah! cunning prelate, thou knowest how my proud mother hates the Woodvilles—thou knowest how her judgment will decide."

"Perhaps so; but at least your grace will be spared all pain and all abasement."

"Will Warwick consent to this?"

"I trust so."

"Learn, and report to me. Enough for to-night's conference."

Edward was left alone, and his mind ran rapidly over the field of action open to him.

"I have half won the earl's army," he thought; "but it would be to lose all hold in their hearts again, if they knew that these unhappy Woodvilles were the cause of a second breach between us. Certes, the Lancastrians are making strong head! Certes, the times must be played with and appeased! And yet these poor gentlemen love me after my own fashion, and not with the bear's hug of that intolerable earl. How came the grim man by so fair a daughter? Sweet Anne! I caught her eye often fixed on me, and with a soft fear which my heart beat loud to read aright. Verily, this is the fourth week I have passed without hearing a woman's sigh! What marvel that so fair a face enamours me! Would that Warwick made her his ambassador; and yet it were all over with the Woodvilles if he did! These men know not how to manage me, and well-a-day, that task is easy eno' to women!"

He laughed gaily to himself as he thus concluded his soliloquy, and extinguished the tapers. But rest did not come to his pillow; and after tossing to and fro for some time in vain search for sleep, he rose and opened his casement to cool the air which the tapers

had overheated. In a single casement, in a broad turret, projecting from an angle in the building,—below the tower in which his chamber was placed, the king saw a solitary light burning steadily. A sight so unusual at such an hour surprised him. "Peradventure, the wily prelate," thought he. "Cunning never sleeps." But a second look showed him the very form that chased his slumbers. Beside the casement, which was partially open, he saw the soft profile of the Lady Anne; it was bent downwards; and what with the clear moonlight, and the lamp within her chamber, he could see distinctly that she was weeping. "Ah! Anne," muttered the amorous king, "would that I were by to kiss away those tears!" While yet the unholy wish murmured on his lips, the lady rose. The fair hand, that seemed almost transparent in the moonlight, closed the casement; and though the light lingered for some minutes ere it left the dark walls of the castle without other sign of life than the step of the sentry, Anne was visible no more.

"Madness—madness—madness!" again murmured the king. "These Neviles are fatal to me in all ways —in hatred or in love!"

BOOK VIII

IN WHICH THE LAST LINK BETWEEN KING-MAKER AND KING SNAPS ASUNDER

CHAPTER I

THE LADY ANNE VISITS THE COURT

It was some weeks after the date of the events last recorded. The storm that hung over the destinies of King Edward was dispersed for the hour, though the scattered clouds still darkened the horizon: the Earl of Warwick had defeated the Lancastrians on the frontier,* and their leader had perished on the scaffold, but Edward's mighty sword had not shone in the battle. Chained by an attraction yet more powerful than slaughter, he had lingered at Middleham, while Warwick led his army to York; and when the earl arrived at the capital of Edward's ancestral duchy, he found that the able and active Hastings—having heard, even before he reached the Duke of Gloucester's camp, of Edward's apparent seizure by the earl and the march to Middleham—had deemed it best to halt at York, and to summon in all haste a council of such of the knights and barons, as either love to the king or envy to Warwick could collect. The report was general that Edward was retained against his will at Middleham, and this rumour Hastings gravely demanded

* Croyl. 552.

Warwick, on the arrival of the latter at York, to disprove. The earl, to clear himself from a suspicion that impeded all his military movements, despatched Lord Montagu to Middleham, who returned not only with the king, but the countess and her daughters, whom Edward, under pretence of proving the complete amity that existed between Warwick and himself, carried in his train. The king's appearance at York reconciled all differences. But he suffered Warwick to march alone against the enemy, and not till after the decisive victory, which left his reign for a while without an open foe, did he return to London.

Thither the earl, by the advice of his friends, also repaired, and in a council of peers, summoned for the purpose, deigned to refute the rumours still commonly circulated by his foes, and not disbelieved by the vulgar, whether of his connivance at the popular rising, or his forcible detention of the king at Middleham. To this, agreeably to the council of the archbishop, succeeded a solemn interview of the heads of the houses of York and Warwick, in which the once fair Rose of Raby (the king's mother) acted as mediator and arbiter. The earl's word to the commons at Olney was ratified. Edward consented to the temporary retirement of the Woodvilles, though the gallant Anthony yet delayed his pilgrimage to Compostella. The vanity of Clarence was contented by the government of Ireland, but, under various pretences, Edward deferred his brother's departure to that important post. A general amnesty was proclaimed, a parliament summoned for the redress of popular grievances, and the betrothal of the king's daughter to Montagu's heir was proclaimed: the latter received the title of Duke of Bedford; and the whole land rejoiced in the recovered

peace of the realm, the retirement of the Woodvilles, and the reconciliation of the young king with his all-beloved subject. Never had the power of the Neviles seemed so secure—never did the throne of Edward appear so stable.

It was at this time that the king prevailed upon the earl and his countess to permit the Lady Anne to accompany the Duchess of Clarence in a visit to the palace of the Tower. The queen had submitted so graciously to the humiliation of her family, that even the haughty Warwick was touched and softened; and the visit of his daughter at such a time became a homage to Elizabeth, which it suited his chivalry to render. The public saw in this visit, which was made with great state and ceremony, the probability of a new and popular alliance. The archbishop had suffered the rumour of Gloucester's attachment to the Lady Anne to get abroad, and the young prince's return from the North was anxiously expected by the gossips of the day.

It was on this occasion that Warwick showed his gratitude for Marmaduke Nevile's devotion. "My dear and gallant kinsman," he said, "I forget not that when thou didst leave the king and the court for the discredited minister and his gloomy hall—I forget not that thou didst tell me of love to some fair maiden, which had not prospered according to thy merits. At least it shall not be from lack of lands, or of the gold spur, which allows the wearer to ride by the side of king or kaisar, that thou canst not choose thy bride as the heart bids thee. I pray thee, sweet cousin, to attend my child Anne to the court, where the king will show thee no ungracious countenance; but it is just to recompense thee for the loss of thy post in his highness's chamber. I hold the king's commission to make

knights of such as can pay the fee, and thy lands shall suffice for the dignity. Kneel down, and rise up, Sir Marmaduke Nevile, Lord of the Manor of Borrodaile, with its woodlands and its farms, and may God and Our Lady render thee puissant in battle and prosperous in love!"

Accordingly, in his new rank, and entitled to ruffle it with the bravest, Sir Marmaduke Nevile accompanied the earl and the Lady Anne to the palace of the tower.

As Warwick, leaving his daughter amidst the brilliant circle that surrounded Elizabeth, turned to address the king, he said, with simple and affected nobleness—

"Ah, my liege, if you needed a hostage of my faith, think that my heart is here, for verily its best blood were less dear to me than that slight girl,—the likeness of her mother, when her lips first felt the touch of mine!"

Edward's bold brow fell, and he blushed as he answered,—"My Elizabeth will hold her as a sister. But, cousin, part you not now for the north?"

"By your leave, I go first to Warwick."

"Ah! you do not wish to approve of my seeming preparations against France?"

"Nay, your highness is not in earnest. I promised the commons that you would need no supplies for so thriftless a war."

"Thou knowest I mean to fulfil all thy pledges. But the country so swarms with disbanded soldiers, that it is politic to hold out to them a hope of service, and so let the clouds gradually pass away."

"Alack, my liege," said Warwick, gravely, "I suppose that a crown teaches the brow to scheme; but hearty peace or open war seems ever the best to me."

Edward smiled, and turned aside. Warwick glanced at his daughter, whom Elizabeth flatteringly caressed, stifled a sigh, and the air seemed lighter to the insects of the court as his proud crest bowed beneath the doorway, and, with the pomp of his long retinue, he vanished from the scene.

"And choose, fair Anne," said the queen, "choose from my ladies, whom you will have for your special train. We would not that your attendance should be less than royal."

The gentle Anne in vain sought to excuse herself from an honour at once arrogant and invidious, though too innocent to perceive the cunning so characteristic of the queen; for, under the guise of a special compliment, Anne had received the royal request to have her female attendants chosen from the court, and Elizabeth now desired to force upon her a selection which could not fail to mortify those not preferred. But glancing timidly round the circle, the noble damsel's eye rested on one fair face, and in that face there was so much that awoke her own interest, and stirred up a fond and sad remembrance, that she passed involuntarily to the stranger's side, and artlessly took her hand. The high-born maidens, grouped around, glanced at each other with a sneer, and slunk back. Even the queen looked surprised, but recovering herself, inclined her head graciously, and said, "Do we read your meaning aright, Lady Anne, and would you this gentlewoman, Mistress Sibyll Warner, as one of your chamber?"

"Sibyll, ah, I knew that my memory failed me not," murmured Anne; and, after bowing assent to the queen, she said, "Do you not also recall, fair demoiselle, our meeting, when children, long years ago?"

"Well, noble dame," * answered Sibyll. And as Anne turned, with her air of modest gentleness, yet of lofty birth and breeding, to explain to the queen that she had met Sibyll in earlier years, the king approached to monopolise his guest's voice and ear. It seemed natural to all present that Edward should devote peculiar attention to the daughter of Warwick and the sister of the Duchess of Clarence; and even Elizabeth suspected no guiltier gallantry in the subdued voice, the caressing manner, which her handsome lord adopted throughout that day, even to the close of the nightly revel,—towards a demoiselle too high (it might well appear) for licentious homage.

But Anne herself, though too guileless to suspect the nature of Edward's courtesy, yet shrunk from it in vague terror. All his beauty, all his fascination, could not root from her mind the remembrance of the exiled prince—nay, the brilliancy of his qualities made her the more averse to him. It darkened the prospects of Edward of Lancaster that Edward of York should wear so gracious and so popular a form. She hailed with delight the hour when she was conducted to her chamber, and, dismissing gently the pompous retinue allotted to her, found herself alone with the young maiden whom she had elected to her special service.

"And you remember me, too, fair Sibyll?" said Anne, with her dulcet and endearing voice.

"Truly, who would not? for as you, then, noble lady, glided apart from the other children, hand in hand with the young prince, in whom all dreamed to see their future king, I heard the universal murmur of—a false prophecy!"

* The title of dame was at that time applied indiscriminately to ladies, whether married or single, if of high birth.

"Ah! and of what?" asked Anne.

"That in the hand the prince clasped, with his small rosy fingers—the hand of great Warwick's daughter—lay the best defence of his father's throne."

Anne's breast heaved, and her small foot began to mark strange characters on the floor.

"So," she said, musingly, "so even here, amidst a new court, you forget not Prince Edward of Lancaster. Oh, we shall find hours to talk of the past days. But how, if your childhood was spent in Margaret's court, does your youth find a welcome in Elizabeth's?"

"Avarice and power had need of my father's science. He is a scholar of good birth, but fallen fortunes—even now—and ever while night lasts, he is at work. I belonged to the train of her grace of Bedford, but when the duchess quitted the court, and the king retained my father in his own royal service, her highness the queen was pleased to receive me among her maidens. Happy that my father's home is mine—who else could tend him?"

"Thou art his only child?—he must love thee dearly?"

"Yet not as I love him—he lives in a life apart from all else that live. But, after all, peradventure it is sweeter to love than to be loved."

Anne, whose nature was singularly tender and woman-like, was greatly affected by this answer: she drew nearer to Sibyll; she twined her arm round her slight form, and kissed her forehead.

"Shall *I* love thee, Sibyll?" she said, with a girl's candid simplicity, "and wilt thou love me?"

"Ah, lady! there are so many to love thee; father, mother, sister—all the world;—the very sun shines more kindly upon the great!"

"Nay!" said Anne, with that jealousy of a claim to suffering to which the gentler natures are prone, "I may have sorrows from which thou art free. I confess to thee, Sibyll, that something, I know not how to explain, draws me strangely towards thy sweet face. Marriage has lost me my only sister—for since Isabel is wed, she is changed to me—would that her place were supplied by thee! Shall I steal thee from the queen when I depart? Ah! my mother—at least thou wilt love her! for verily, to love my mother you have but to breathe the same air. Kiss me, Sibyll."

Kindness, of late, had been strange to Sibyll, especially from her own sex, one of her own age; it came like morning upon the folded blossom. She threw her arms round the new friend that seemed sent to her from heaven; she kissed Anne's face and hands with grateful tears.

"Ah!" she said, at last, when she could command a voice still broken with emotion—"if I could ever serve—ever repay thee—though those gracious words were the last thy lips should ever deign to address to me!"

Anne was delighted; she had never yet found one to protect; she had never yet found one in whom thoroughly to confide. Gentle as her mother was, the distinction between child and parent was, even in the fond family she belonged to, so great in that day, that she could never have betrayed to the countess the wild weakness of her young heart.

The wish to communicate—to reveal—is so natural to extreme youth, and in Anne that disposition was so increased by a nature at once open and inclined to lean on others, that she had, as we have seen, sought a confidante in Isabel; but with her, even at the first,

she found but the half-contemptuous pity of a strong and hard mind; and lately, since Edward's visit to Middleham, the Duchess of Clarence had been so wrapt in her own imperious egotism and discontented ambition, that the timid Anne had not even dared to touch, with her, upon those secrets which it flushed her own bashful cheek to recall. And this visit to the court—this new, unfamiliar scene—this estrangement from all the old accustomed affections, had produced in her that sense of loneliness which is so irksome, till grave experience of real life accustoms us to the common lot. So with the exaggerated and somewhat morbid sensibility that belonged to her, she turned at once, and by impulse, to this sudden, yet graceful friendship. Here was one of her own age, one who had known sorrow, one whose voice and eyes charmed her, one who would not chide even folly, one, above all, who had seen her beloved prince, one associated with her fondest memories, one who might have a thousand tales to tell of the day when the outlaw-boy was a monarch's heir. In the childishness of her soft years, she almost wept at another channel for so much natural tenderness. It was half the woman gaining a woman-friend—half the child clinging to a new playmate.

"Ah, Sibyll," she whispered, "do not leave me to-night—this strange place daunts me, and the figures on the arras seem so tall and spectre-like—and they say the old tower is haunted—Stay, dear Sibyll!"

And Sibyll stayed.

CHAPTER II

THE SLEEPING INNOCENCE—THE WAKEFUL CRIME

While these charming girls thus innocently conferred; while, Anne's sweet voice running on in her artless fancies, they helped each other to undress; while hand in hand they knelt in prayer by the crucifix in the dim recess; while timidly they extinguished the light, and stole to rest; while, conversing in whispers, growing gradually more faint and low, they sank into guileless sleep;—the unholy king paced his solitary chamber, parched with the fever of the sudden and frantic passion, that swept away from a heart, in which every impulse was a giant, all the memories of honour, gratitude, and law.

The mechanism of this strong man's nature was that almost unknown to the modern time; it belonged to those earlier days which furnish to Greece the terrible legends Ovid has clothed in gloomy fire, which a similar civilisation produced no less in the Middle Ages, whether of Italy or the North—that period when crime took a grandeur from its excess—when power was so great and absolute, that its girth burst the ligaments of conscience—when a despot was but the incarnation of WILL—when honour was indeed a religion, but its faith was valour, and it wrote its decalogue with the point of a fearless sword.

The youth of Edward IV. was as the youth of an ancient Titan—of an Italian Borgia; through its veins the hasty blood rolled as a devouring flame. This impetuous and fiery temperament was rendered yet more fearful by the indulgence of every intemperance; it

fed on wine and lust; its very virtues strengthened its vices—its courage stifled every whisper of prudence—its intellect, uninured to all discipline, taught it to disdain every obstacle to its desires. Edward could, indeed, as we have seen, be false and crafty—a temporiser—a dissimulator—but it was only as the tiger creeps, the better to spring, undetected, on its prey. If detected, the cunning ceased, the daring rose, and the mighty savage had fronted ten thousand foes, secure in its fangs and talons, its bold heart and its deadly spring. Hence, with all Edward's abilities, the astonishing levities and indiscretions of his younger years. It almost seemed, as we have seen him play fast and loose with the might of Warwick, and with that power, whether of barons or of people, which any other prince of half his talents would have trembled to arouse against an unrooted throne;—it almost seemed as if he loved to provoke a danger, for the pleasure it gave the brain to baffle, or the hand to crush it. His whole nature coveting excitement, nothing was left to the beautiful, the luxurious Edward, already wearied with pomp and pleasure, but what was unholy and forbidden. In his court were a hundred ladies, perhaps not less fair than Anne, at least of a beauty more commanding the common homage, but these he had only to smile on, with ease to win. No awful danger, no inexpiable guilt, attended those vulgar frailties, and therefore they ceased to tempt. But here the virgin guest, the daughter of his mightiest subject, the beloved treasure of the man whose hand had built a throne, whose word had dispersed an army,—here, the more the reason warned, the conscience started, the more the hell-born passion was aroused.

Like men of his peculiar constitution, Edward was

wholly incapable of pure and steady love. His affection for his queen the most resembled that diviner affection; but when analysed, it was composed of feelings widely distinct. From a sudden passion, not otherwise to be gratified, he had made the rashest sacrifices for an unequal marriage. His vanity, and something of original magnanimity, despite his vices, urged him to protect what he himself had raised,—to secure the honour of the subject who was honoured by the king. In common with most rude and powerful natures, he was strongly alive to the affections of a father, and the faces of his children helped to maintain the influence of the mother. But in all this, we need scarcely say, that that true love, which is at once a passion and a devotion, existed not. Love with him cared not for the person loved, but solely for its own gratification; it was desire for possession—nothing more. But that desire was the will of a king who never knew fear or scruple; and, pampered by eternal indulgence, it was to the feeble lusts of common men what the storm is to the west wind. Yet still, as in the solitude of night he paced his chamber, the shadow of the great crime advancing upon his soul appalled even that dauntless conscience. He gasped for breath —his cheeks flushed crimson, and the next moment grew deadly pale. He heard the loud beating of his heart. He stopped still. He flung himself on a seat, and hid his face with his hands, then starting up, he exclaimed—"No—no! I cannot shut out that sweet face, those blue eyes from my gaze. They haunt me to my destruction and her own. Yet why say destruction? If she love me, who shall know the deed; if she love me not, will she dare to reveal her shame! Shame!—nay, a king's embrace never dishonours. A

king's bastard is a house's pride. All is still—the very moon vanishes from heaven. The noiseless rushes in the gallery give no echo to the footstep. Fie on me! Can a Plantagenet know fear?" He allowed himself no further time to pause; he opened the door gently, and stole along the gallery. He knew well the chamber, for it was appointed by his command; and, besides the usual door from the corridor, a small closet conducted to a secret panel behind the arras. It was the apartment occupied, in her visits to the court, by the queen's rival, the Lady Elizabeth Lucy. He passed into the closet—he lifted the arras—he stood in that chamber, which gratitude and chivalry, and hospitable faith, should have made sacred as a shrine. And suddenly, as he entered, the moon, before hid beneath a melancholy cloud, broke forth in awful splendour, and her light rushed through the casement opposite his eye, and bathed the room with the beams of a ghostlier day.

The abruptness of the solemn and mournful glory scared him as the rebuking face of a living thing; a presence as if not of earth seemed to interpose between the victim and the guilt. It was, however, but for a moment that his step halted. He advanced: he drew aside the folds of the curtain heavy with tissue of gold, and the sleeping face of Anne lay hushed before him. It looked pale in the moonlight, but ineffably serene, and the smile on its lips seemed still sweeter than that which it wore awake. So fixed was his gaze—so ardently did his whole heart and being feed through his eyes upon that exquisite picture of innocence and youth, that he did not see for some moments that the sleeper was not alone. Suddenly an exclamation rose to his lips—he clenched his hand in jealous agony—he approached—he bent over—he heard the regular

breathing which the dreams of guilt never know, and then, when he saw that pure and interlaced embrace—the serene yet somewhat melancholy face of Sibyll, which seemed hueless as marble in the moonlight—bending partially over that of Anne, as if, even in sleep, watchful,—both charming forms so linked and woven that the two seemed as one life, the very breath in each rising and ebbing with the other, the dark ringlets of Sibyll mingling with the auburn gold of Anne's luxuriant hair, and the darkness and the gold, tress within tress, falling impartially over either neck, that gleamed like ivory beneath that common veil—when he saw this twofold loveliness, the sentiment—the conviction of that mysterious defence which exists in purity—thrilled like ice through his burning veins. In all his might of monarch and of man, he felt the awe of that unlooked-for protection—maidenhood sheltering maidenhood—innocence guarding innocence. The double virtue appalled and baffled him; and that slight arm which encircled the neck he would have perilled his realm to clasp, shielded his victim more effectually than the bucklers of all the warriors that ever gathered round the banner of the lofty Warwick. Night and the occasion befriended him; but in vain. While Sibyll was there, Anne was saved. He ground his teeth, and muttered to himself. At that moment Anne turned restlessly. This movement disturbed the light sleep of her companion. She spoke half inaudibly, but the sound was as the hoot of shame in the ear of the guilty king. He let fall the curtain, and was gone. And if one who lived afterwards to hear, and to credit, the murderous doom which, unless history lies, closed the male line of Edward, had beheld the king stealing, felon-like, from the chamber, his step reeling to and

fro the gallery floors—his face distorted by stormy passion—his lips white and murmuring—his beauty and his glory dimmed and humbled—the spectator might have half believed that while Edward gazed upon those harmless sleepers, A VISION OF THE TRAGEDY TO COME had stricken down his thought of guilt, and filled up its place with horror,—a vision of a sleep as pure—of two forms wrapped in an embrace as fond—of intruders meditating a crime scarce fouler than his own; and the sins of the father starting into grim corporeal shapes, to become the deathsmen of the sons!

CHAPTER III

NEW DANGERS TO THE HOUSE OF YORK—AND THE KING'S HEART ALLIES ITSELF WITH REBELLION AGAINST THE KING'S THRONE

Oh! beautiful is the love of youth to youth, and touching the tenderness of womanhood to woman; and fair in the eyes of the happy sun is the waking of holy sleep, and the virgin kiss upon virgin lips smiling and murmuring the sweet "Good morrow!"

Anne was the first to wake; and as the bright winter morn, robust with frosty sunbeams, shone cheerily upon Sibyll's face, she was struck with a beauty she had not sufficiently observed the day before; for in the sleep of the young the traces of thought and care vanish, the aching heart is lulled in the body's rest, the hard lines relax into flexile ease, a softer, warmer bloom steals over the cheek, and, relieved from the stiff restraints of dress, the rounded limbs repose in a more alluring grace! Youth seems younger in its

slumber, and beauty more beautiful, and purity more pure. Long and dark, the fringe of the eyelash rested upon the white lids, and the freshness of the parting pouted lips invited the sister kiss that wakened up the sleeper.

"Ah! lady," said Sibyll, parting her tresses from her dark blue eyes—"you are here—you are safe!—blessed be the saints and Our Lady—for I had a dream in the night that startled and appalled me."

"And my dreams were all blithe and golden," said Anne. "What was thine?"

"Methought you were asleep and in this chamber, and I not by your side, but watching you at a little distance; and, lo! a horrible serpent glided from yon recess, and, crawling to your pillow, I heard its hiss, and strove to come to your aid, but in vain; a spell seemed to chain my limbs. At last I found voice—I cried aloud—I woke; and mock me not, but I surely heard a parting footstep, and the low grating of some sliding door."

"It was the dream's influence, enduring beyond the dream. I have often felt it—nay, even last night; for I, too, dreamt of another, dreamt that I stood by the altar with one far away, and when I woke—for I woke also—it was long before I could believe it was thy hand I held, and thine arm that embraced me."

The young friends rose, and their toilet was scarcely ended, when again appeared in the chamber all the stateliness of retinue allotted to the Lady Anne. Sibyll turned to depart. "And whither go you?" asked Anne.

"To visit my father: it is my first task on rising," returned Sibyll, in a whisper.

"You must let me visit him, too, at a later hour. Find me here an hour before noon, Sibyll."

The early morning was passed by Anne in the queen's company. The refection, the embroidery frame, the closheys, filled up the hours. The Duchess of Clarence had left the palace with her lord to visit the king's mother at Baynard's Castle; and Anne's timid spirits were saddened by the strangeness of the faces round her, and Elizabeth's habitual silence. There was something in the weak and ill-fated queen that ever failed to conciliate friends. Though perpetually striving to form and create a party, she never succeeded in gaining confidence or respect. And no one raised so high was ever left so friendless as Elizabeth, when, in her awful widowhood, her dowry home became the sanctuary. All her power was but the shadow of her husband's royal sun, and vanished when the orb prematurely set; yet she had all gifts of person in her favour, and a sleek smoothness of manner that seemed to the superficial formed to win; but the voice was artificial, and the eye cold and stealthy. About her formal precision there was an eternal consciousness of self—a breathing egotism. Her laugh was displeasing—cynical, not mirthful; she had none of that forgetfulness of self, that warmth when gay, that earnestness when sad, which create sympathy. Her beauty was without loveliness—her character without charm; every proportion in her form might allure the sensualist; but there stopped the fascination. The mind was trivial, though cunning and dissimulating; and the very evenness of her temper seemed but the clockwork of a heart insensible to its own movements. Vain in prosperity, what wonder that she was so abject in misfortune? What wonder that even while, in later and gloomier years,* accusing Richard III. of

* Grafton, 806.

the murder of her royal sons, and *knowing* him, at least, the executioner of her brother, and her child by the bridegroom of her youth,* she consented to send her daughters to his custody, though subjected to the stain of illegitimacy, and herself only recognised as the harlot?

The king, meanwhile, had ridden out betimes alone, and no other of the male sex presumed in his absence to invade the female circle. It was with all a girl's fresh delight that Anne escaped at last to her own chamber, where she found Sibyll, and, with her guidance, she threaded the gloomy mazes of the Tower. "Let me see," she whispered, "before we visit your father, let me see the turret in which the unhappy Henry is confined."

And Sibyll led her through the arch of that tower, now called "The Bloody," and showed her the narrow casement deep sunk in the mighty wall, without which hung the starling in the cage, basking its plumes in the wintry sun. Anne gazed with that deep interest and tender reverence which the parent of the man she loves naturally excites in a woman; and while thus standing sorrowful and silent, the casement was unbarred, and she saw the mild face of the human captive;—he seemed to talk to the bird, which, in shrill tones and with clapping wings, answered his address. At that time a horn sounded at a little distance off; a clangour of arms, as the sentries saluted, was heard; the demoiselles retreated through the arch, and mount-

* Anthony Lord Rivers, and Lord Richard Gray. Not the least instance of the frivolity of Elizabeth's mind is to be found in her willingness, after all the woes of her second widowhood, and when she was not very far short of sixty years old, to take a third husband, James III., of Scotland—a marriage prevented only by the death of the Scotch king.

ed the stair conducting to the very room then unoccupied, in which tradition records the murder of the Third Richard's nephews; and scarcely had they gained this retreat, ere towards the Bloody Gate, and before the prison tower, rode the king who had mounted the captive's throne. His steed, gaudy with its housing—his splendid dress—the knights and squires who started forward from every corner to hold his gilded stirrup—his vigorous youth, so blooming and so radiant—all contrasted, with oppressive force, the careworn face that watched him meekly through the little casement of the Wakefield Tower. Edward's large, quick blue eye caught sudden sight of the once familiar features. He looked up steadily, and his gaze encountered the fallen king's. He changed countenance: but with the external chivalry that made the surface of his hollow though brilliant character, he bowed low to his saddle-bow as he saw his captive, and removed the plumed cap from his high brow.

Henry smiled sadly, and shook his reverend head, as if gently to rebuke the mockery; then he closed the casement, and Edward rode into the yard.

"How can the king hold here a court and here a prison? Oh, hard heart!" murmured Anne, as, when Edward had disappeared, the damsels bent their way to Adam's chamber.

"Would the Earl Warwick approve thy pity, sweet Lady Anne?" asked Sibyll.

"My father's heart is too generous to condemn it," returned Anne, wiping the tears from her eyes; "how often in the knight's galliard shall I see that face!"

The turret in which Warner's room was placed flanked the wing inhabited by the royal family and their more distinguished guests (viz., the palace,

properly speaking, as distinct from the fortress), and communicated with the regal lodge by a long corridor, raised above cloisters and open to a courtyard. At one end of this corridor a door opened upon the passage, in which was situated the chamber of the Lady Anne; the other extremity communicated with a rugged stair of stone, conducting to the rooms tenanted by Warner. Leaving Sibyll to present her learned father to the gentle Anne, we follow the king into the garden which he entered on dismounting. He found here the Archbishop of York, who had come to the palace in his barge, and with but a slight retinue, and who was now conversing with Hastings in earnest whispers.

The king, who seemed thoughtful and fatigued, approached the two, and said, with a forced smile, "What learned sententiary engages you two scholars?"

"Your grace," said the archbishop, "Minerva was not precisely the goddess most potent over our thoughts at that moment. I received a letter last evening from the Duke of Gloucester, and as I know the love borne by the prince to the Lord Hastings, I inquired of your chamberlain how far he would have foreguessed the news it announced?"

"And what may the tidings be?" asked Edward, absently.

The prelate hesitated.

"Sire," he said, gravely, "the familiar confidence with which both your highness and the Duke of Gloucester distinguish the chamberlain, permits me to communicate the purport of the letter in his presence. The young duke informs me that he hath long conceived an affection which he would improve into marriage, but before he address either the demoiselle or

her father, he prays me to confer with your grace, whose pleasure in this, as in all things, will be his sovereign law."

"Ah, Richard loves me with a truer love than George of Clarence! But whom can he have seen on the borders worthy to be a prince's bride?"

"It is no sudden passion, sir, as I before hinted; nay, it has been for some time sufficiently notorious to his friends, and many of the court—it is an affection for a maiden known to him in childhood, connected to him by blood,—my niece, Anne Nevile."

As if stung by a scorpion, Edward threw off the prelate's arm, on which he had been leaning with his usual caressing courtesy.

"This is too much!" said he, quickly, and his face, before somewhat pale, grew highly flushed.—"Is the whole royalty of England to be one Nevile? Have I not sufficiently narrowed the bases of my throne? Instead of mating my daughter to a foreign power—to Spain or to Bretagne—she is betrothed to young Montagu! Clarence weds Isabel, and now Gloucester—no, prelate, I will not consent!"

The archbishop was so little prepared for this burst, that he remained speechless. Hastings pressed the king's arm, as if to caution him against so imprudent a display of resentment. But the king walked on, not heeding him, and in great disturbance. Hastings interchanged looks with the archbishop, and followed his royal master.

"My king," he said, in an earnest whisper, "whatever you decide, do not again provoke unhappy feuds laid at rest! Already this morning I sought your chamber, but you were abroad, to say that I have received intelligence of a fresh rising of the Lancas-

trians in Lincolnshire, under Sir Robert Welles, and the warlike knight of Scrivelsby, Sir Thomas Dymoke. This is not yet an hour to anger the pride of the Neviles!"

"O Hastings! Hastings!" said the king, in a tone of passionate emotion—"there are moments when the human heart cannot dissemble! Howbeit your advice is wise and honest! No, we must not anger the Neviles!"

He turned abruptly; rejoined the archbishop, who stood on the spot on which the king had left him, his arms folded on his breast, his face calm, but haughty.

"My most worshipful cousin," said Edward, "forgive the well-known heat of my hasty moods! I had hoped that Richard would, by a foreign alliance, have repaired the occasion of confirming my dynasty abroad, which Clarence lost. But, no matter! Of these things we will speak anon. Say naught to Richard till time ripens maturer resolutions: he is a youth yet. What strange tidings are these from Lincolnshire?"

"The house of your purveyor, Sir Robert de Burgh, is burned—his lands wasted. The rebels are headed by lords and knights. Robin of Redesdale, who, methinks, bears a charmed life, has even ventured to rouse the disaffected in my brother's very shire of Warwick."

"Oh, Henry," exclaimed the king, casting his eyes towards the turret that held his captive, "well mightest thou call a crown 'a wreath of thorns!'"

"I have already," said the archbishop, "despatched couriers to my brother, to recall him from Warwick, whither he went on quitting your highness. I have done more—prompted by a zeal that draws me from the care of the church to that of the state, I have sum-

moned the Lords St. John, De Fulke, and others, to my house of the More;—praying your highness to deign to meet them, and well sure that a smile from your princely lips will regain their hearts and confirm their allegiance, at a moment when new perils require all strong arms."

"You have done most wisely. I will come to your palace—appoint your own day."

"It will take some days for the barons to arrive from their castles. I fear not ere the tenth day from this."

"Ah!" said the king, with a vivacity that surprised his listeners, aware of his usual impetuous energy, "the delay will but befriend us; as for Warwick, permit me to alter your arrangements; let him employ the interval, not in London, where he is useless, but in raising men in the neighbourhood of his castle, and in defeating the treason of this Redesdale knave. We will give commission to him, and to Clarence, to levy troops; Hastings, see to this forthwith. Ye say Sir Robert Welles leads the Lincolnshire varlets; I know the nature of his father, the Lord Welles—a fearful and timorous one; I will send for him, and the father's head shall answer for the son's faith. Pardon me, dear cousin, that I leave you to attend these matters. Prithee visit our queen, meanwhile she holds you our guest."

"Nay, your highness must vouchsafe my excuse; I also have your royal interests too much at heart to while an hour in my pleasurement. I will but see the friends of our house, now in London, and then back to the More, and collect the force of my tenants and retainers."

"Ever right, fair speed to you—cardinal that shall be! Your arm, Hastings."

The king and his favourite took their way into the state chambers.

"Abet not Gloucester in this alliance—abet him not!" said the king, solemnly.

"Pause, sire! This alliance gives to Warwick a wise counsellor, instead of the restless Duke of Clarence. Reflect what danger may ensue if an ambitious lord, discontented with your reign, obtains the hand of the great earl's coheiress, and the half of a hundred baronies that command an army larger than the crown's."

Though these reasonings at a calmer time might well have had their effect on Edward, at that moment they were little heeded by his passions. He stamped his foot violently on the floor. "Hastings!" he exclaimed, "be silent! or——" He stopped short—mastered his emotion—"Go, assemble our privy council. We have graver matters than a boy's marriage now to think of."

It was in vain that Edward sought to absorb the fire of his nature in state affairs in all needful provisions against the impending perils, in schemes of war and vengeance. The fatal frenzy that had seized him haunted him everywhere, by day and by night. For some days after the unsuspected visit which he had so criminally stolen to his guest's chamber, something of knightly honour, of religious scruple, of common reason—awakened in him the more by the dangers which had sprung up, and which the Neviles were now actively employed in defeating—struggled against his guilty desire, and roused his conscience to a less feeble resistance than it usually displayed when opposed to passion; but the society of Anne, into which he was necessarily thrown so many hours in the day,

and those hours chiefly after the indulgences of the banquet, was more powerful than all the dictates of a virtue so seldom exercised as to have none of the strength of habit. And as the time drew near, when he must visit the archbishop, head his army against the rebels (whose force daily increased, despite the captivity of Lord Welles and Sir Thomas Dymoke, who, on the summons of the king, had first taken sanctuary, and then yielded their persons on the promise of pardon and safety), and restore Anne to her mother—as this time drew near, his perturbation of mind became visible to the whole court; but, with the instinct of his native craft, he contrived to conceal its cause. For the first time in his life he had no confidant—he did not dare trust his secret to Hastings. His heart gnawed itself. Neither, though constantly stealing to Anne's side, could he venture upon language that might startle and enlighten her. He felt that even those attentions, which on the first evening of her arrival had been noticed by the courtiers, could not be safely renewed. He was grave and constrained, even when by her side, and the etiquette of the court allowed him no opportunity for unwitnessed conference. In this suppressed and unequal struggle with himself the time passed, till it was now but the day before that fixed for his visit to the More. And, as he rose at morning from his restless couch, the struggle was over, and the soul resolved to dare the crime. His first thought was to separate Anne from Sibyll. He affected to rebuke the queen for giving to his high-born guest an associate below her dignity, and on whose character, poor girl, rested the imputation of witchcraft; and when the queen replied that Lady Anne herself had so chosen, he hit upon the expedient

of visiting Warner himself, under pretence of inspecting his progress,—affected to be struck by the sickly appearance of the sage, and sending for Sibyll, told her, with an air of gracious consideration, that her first duty was to attend her parent, that the queen released her for some days from all court duties, and that he had given orders to prepare the room adjoining Master Warner's, and held by Friar Bungey, till that worthy had retired with his patroness from the court, to which she would for the present remove.

Sibyll, wondering at this novel mark of consideration in the careless king, yet imputing it to the high value set on her father's labours, thanked Edward with simple earnestness, and withdrew. In the anteroom she encountered Hastings, on his way to the king. He started in surprise, and with a jealous pang: "What thou, Sibyll! and from the king's closet! What led thee, thither?"

"His grace's command." And too noble for the pleasure of exciting the distrust that delights frivolous minds as the proof of power, Sibyll added, "The king has been kindly speaking to me of my father's health." The courtier's brow cleared—he mused a moment, and said, in a whisper, "I beseech thee to meet me an hour hence at the eastern rampart."

Since the return of Lord Hastings to the palace there had been an estrangement and distance in his manner, ill suiting one who enjoyed the rights of an accepted suitor, and wounding alike to Sibyll's affection and her pride; but her confidence in his love and truth was entire. Her admiration for him partook of worship, and she steadily sought to reason away any causes for alarm by recalling the state cares which pressed heavily upon him, and whispering to herself

that word of "wife," which, coming in passionate music from those beloved lips, had thrown a mist over the present—a glory over the future; and in the king's retention of Adam Warner, despite the Duchess of Bedford's strenuous desire to carry him off with Friar Bungey, and restore him to his tasks of alchemist and multiplier, as well as in her own promotion to the queen's service, Sibyll could not but recognise the influence of her powerful lover. His tones now were tender, though grave and earnest. Surely, in the meeting he asked, all not comprehended would be explained. And so, with a light heart, she passed on.

Hastings sighed as his eye followed her from the room, and thus said he to himself—"Were I the obscure gentleman I once was, how sweet a lot would that girl's love choose to me from the urn of fate! But, ho! when we taste of power and greatness, and master the world's dark wisdom, what doth love shrink to?—an hour's bliss, and a life's folly." His delicate lip curled, and breaking from his soliloquy, he entered the king's closet. Edward was resting his face upon the palms of his hands, and his bright eyes dwelt upon vacant space, till they kindled into animation as they lighted on his favourite.

"Dear Will," said the king, "knowest thou that men say thou art bewitched?"

"*Beau sire,* often have men, when a sweet face hath captured thy great heart, said the same of thee!"

"It may be so, with truth, for verily, love is the arch-devil's birth."

The king rose, and strode his chamber with a quick step; at last pausing—

"Hastings," he said, "so thou lovest the multiplier's pretty daughter. She hath just left me. Art thou jealous?"

"Happily, your highness sees no beauty in locks that have the gloss of the raven, and eyes that have the hue of the violet."

"No, I am a constant man, constant to one idea of beauty in a thousand forms—eyes like the summer's light-blue sky, and locks like its golden sunbeams! But to set thy mind at rest, Will, know that I have but compassionated the sickly state of the scholar, whom thou prizest so highly; and I have placed thy fair Sibyll's chamber near her father's. Young Lovell says thou art bent on wedding the wizard's daughter."

"And if I were, *beau sire?*"

Edward looked grave.

"If thou wert, my poor Will, thou wouldst lose all the fame for shrewd wisdom which justifies thy sudden fortunes. No—no—thou art the flower and prince of my new seignorie—thou must mate thyself with a name and a barony that shall be worthy thy fame and thy prospects. Love beauty, but marry power, Will. In vain would thy king draw thee up, if a despised wife draw thee down!"

Hastings listened with profound attention to these words. The king did not wait for his answer, but added, laughingly—

"It is thine own fault, crafty gallant, if thou dost not end all her spells."

"What ends the spells of youth and beauty, *beau sire?*"

"Possession!" replied the king, in a hollow and muttered voice.

Hastings was about to answer, when the door opened, and the officer in waiting announced the Duke of Clarence.

"Ha!" said Edward, "George comes, to importune me for leave to depart to the government of Ireland, and I have to make him weet that I think my Lord Worcester a safer viceroy of the two!"

"Your highness will pardon me; but, though I deemed you too generous in the appointment, it were dangerous now to annul it."

"More dangerous to confirm it. Elizabeth has caused me to see the folly of a grant made over the malmsey—a wine, by the way, in which poor George swears he would be content to drown himself. Viceroy of Ireland! My father had that government, and once tasting the sweets of royalty, ceased to be a subject! No, no, Clarence——"

"Can never meditate treason against a brother's crown. Has he the wit, or the energy, or the genius, for so desperate an ambition?"

"No; but he hath the vanity. And I will wager thee a thousand marks to a silver penny that my jester shall talk giddie Georgie into advancing a claim to be soldan of Egypt, or pope of Rome!"

CHAPTER IV

THE FOSTER-BROTHERS

Sir Marmaduke Nevile was sunning his bravery in the Tower Green, amidst the other idlers of the court, proud of the gold chain and the gold spurs which attested his new rank, and not grieved to have exchanged the solemn walls of Middleham for the gay delights of the voluptuous palace, when, to his pleasure and surprise he perceived his foster-brother enter the gate-

way; and no sooner had Nicholas entered, than a bevy of the young courtiers hastened eagerly towards him.

"Gramercy!" quoth Sir Marmaduke, to one of the by-standers, "what hath chanced to make Nick Alwyn a man of such note, that so many wings of satin and pile should flutter round him like sparrows round an owl, which, by the Holy Rood, his wise face somewhat resembleth."

"Know you not that Master Alwyn, since he hath commenced trade for himself, hath acquired already the repute of the couthliest goldsmith in London? No dague-hilts—no buckles are to be worn, save those that he fashions; and—an' he live, and the House of York prosper—verily, Master Alwyn, the goldsmith, will, ere long, be the richest and best man from Mile-end to the Sanctuary."

"Right glad am I to hear it," said honest Marmaduke, heartily, and approaching Alwyn, he startled the precise trader by a friendly slap on the shoulder.

"What, man, art thou too proud to remember Marmaduke Nevile! Come to my lodgment, yonder, and talk of old days over the king's canary."

"I crave your pardon, dear Master Nevile."

"Master—avaunt! *Sir* Marmaduke—knighted by the hand of Lord Warwick—Sir Marmaduke Nevile, lord of a manor he hath never yet seen, sober Alwyn."

Then drawing his foster-brother's arm in his, Marmaduke led him to the chamber in which he lodged.

The young men spent some minutes in congratulating each other on their respective advances in life:—the gentleman, who had attained competence and station, simply by devotion to a powerful patron—the trader, who had already won repute and the prospect of wealth, by ingenuity, application, and toil; and yet,

to do justice, as much virtue went to Marmaduke's loyalty to Warwick, as to Alwyn's capacities for making a fortune. Mutual compliments over, Alwyn said —hesitatingly—

"And dost thou find Mistress Sibyll more gently disposed to thee than when thou didst complain to me of her cruelty?"

"Marry, good Nicholas, I will be frank with thee. When I left the court to follow Lord Warwick, there were rumours of the gallantries of Lord Hastings to the girl, which grieved me to the heart. I spoke to her thereof bluntly and honourably, and got but high looks and scornful words in return. Good fellow, I thank thee for that squeeze of the hand and that doleful sigh. In my absence at Middleham, I strove hard to forget one who cared so little for me. My dear Alwyn, those Yorkshire lasses are parlously comely, and mighty douce and debonnaire. So I stormed cruel Sibyll out of my heart, perforce of numbers."

"And thou lovest her no more?"

"Not I, by this goblet! On coming back, it is true, I felt pleased to clank my gold spurs in her presence, and curious to see if my new fortunes would bring out a smile of approval; and verily, to speak sooth, the donzell was kind and friendly, and spoke to me so cheerly of the pleasure she felt in my advancement, that I adventured again a few words of the old folly. But my lassie drew up like a princess, and I am a cured man."

"By your troth?"

"By my troth!"

Alwyn's head sank on his bosom, in silent thought. Sir Marmaduke emptied his goblet; and really the young knight looked so fair and so gallant, in his new

surcoat of velvet, that it was no marvel if he should find enough food for consolation in a court where men spent six hours a day in making love—nor in vain.

"And what say they still of the Lord Hastings?" asked Alwyn, breaking silence. "Nothing, I trow and trust, that arraigns the poor lady's honour—though much that may scoff at her simple faith, in a nature so vain and fickle. 'The tongue's not steel, yet it cuts,' as the proverb saith of the slanderer."

"No! scandal spares her virtue as woman—to run down her cunning as witch! They say that Hastings hath not prevailed, nor sought to prevail—that he is spell-bound. By St. Thomas, from a maid of such character, Marmaduke Nevile is happily rescued!"

"Sir Marmaduke," then said Alwyn, in a grave and earnest voice—"it behoves me, as true friend, though humble, and as honest man, to give thee my secret, in return for thine own. I love this girl. Ay, ay! thou thinkest that love is a strange word in a craftsman's lips, but 'cold flint hides hot fire.' I would not have been thy rival, Heaven forefend! hadst thou still cherished a hope—or if thou now wilt forbid my aspiring; but if thou wilt not say me nay, I will try my chance in delivering a pure soul from a crafty wooer."

Marmaduke stared in great surprise at his foster-brother; and though, no doubt, he spoke truth, when he said he was cured of his love for Sibyll, he yet felt a sort of jealousy at Alwyn's unexpected confession, and his vanity was hurt at the notion that the plain-visaged trader should attempt where the handsome gentleman had failed. However, his blunt, generous, manly nature, after a brief struggle, got the better of these sore feelings, and holding out his hand to Alwyn, he said, "My dear foster-brother, try the hazard and cast thy

dice, if you wilt. Heaven prosper thee, if success be for thine own good! But if she be really given to witchcraft (plague on thee, man, sneer not at the word), small comfort to bed and hearth can such practices bring!"

"Alas!" said Alwyn, "the witchcraft is on the side of Hastings—the witchcraft of fame and rank, and a glozing tongue and experienced art. But she shall not fall, if a true arm can save her; and 'though Hope be a small child, she can carry a great anchor?'"

These words were said so earnestly, that they opened new light into Marmaduke's mind, and his native generosity standing in lieu of intellect, he comprehended sympathetically the noble motives which actuated the son of commerce.

"My poor Alwyn," he said, "if thou canst save this young maid—whom by my troth I loved well, and who tells me yet, that she loveth me as a sister loves—right glad shall I be. But thou stakest thy peace of mind against hers:—fair luck to thee, say I again—and if thou wilt risk thy chance at once (for suspense is love's purgatory), seize the moment. I saw Sibyll, just ere we met, pass to the ramparts, alone; at this sharp season, the place is deserted—go."

"I will, this moment!" said Alwyn, rising and turning very pale; but as he gained the door, he halted —"I had forgot, Master Nevile, that I bring the king his signet-ring, new set, of the falcon and fetterlock."

"They will keep thee three hours in the ante-room. The Duke of Clarence is now with the king. Trust the ring to me, I shall see his highness ere he dines."

Even in his love, Alwyn had the Saxon's considerations of business; he hesitated—"May I not endanger

thereby the king's favour and loss of custom?" said the trader.

"Tush, man! little thou knowest King Edward; he cares naught for the ceremonies: moreover, the Neviles are now all-puissant in favour. I am here in attendance on sweet Lady Anne, whom the king loves as a daughter, though too young for sire to so well-grown a donzell; and a word from her lip, if need be, will set all as smooth as this gorget of lawn!"

Thus assured, Alwyn gave the ring to his friend, and took his way at once to the ramparts. Marmaduke remained behind to finish the canary and marvel how so sober a man should form so ardent a passion. Nor was he much less surprised to remark that his friend, though still speaking with a strong provincial accent, and still sowing his discourse with rustic saws and proverbs, had risen in language and in manner with the rise of his fortunes. "An' he go on so, and become lord mayor," muttered Marmaduke, "verily he will half look like a gentleman!"

To these meditations the young knight was not long left in peace. A messenger from Warwick House sought and found him, with the news that the earl was on his road to London, and wished to see Sir Marmaduke the moment of his arrival, which was hourly expected. The young knight's hardy brain somewhat flustered by the canary, Alwyn's secret, and this sudden tidings, he hastened to obey his chief's summons, and forgot, till he gained the earl's mansion, the signet-ring entrusted to him by Alwyn. "What matters it?" said he then, philosophically—"the king hath rings eno' on his fingers not to miss one for an hour or so, and I dare not send any one else with it. Marry, I must plunge my head in cold water, to get rid of the fumes of the wine."

CHAPTER V

THE LOVER AND THE GALLANT—WOMAN'S CHOICE

Alwyn bent his way to the ramparts, a part of which, then, resembled the boulevards of a French town, having rows of trees, green sward, a winding walk, and seats placed at frequent intervals, for the repose of the loungers. During the summer evenings, the place was a favourite resort of the court idlers; but now, in winter, it was usually deserted, save by the sentries, placed at distant intervals. The trader had not gone far in his quest when he perceived, a few paces before him, the very man he had most cause to dread; and Lord Hastings, hearing the sound of a foot-fall amongst the crisp, faded leaves, that strewed the path, turned abruptly as Alwyn approached his side.

At the sight of his formidable rival, Alwyn had formed one of those resolutions which occur only to men of his decided, plain-spoken, energetic character. His distinguishing shrewdness and penetration had given him considerable insight into the nobler as well as the weaker qualities of Hastings; and his hope in the former influenced the determination to which he came. The reflections of Hastings at that moment were of a nature to augur favourably to the views of the humbler lover; for, during the stirring scenes in which his late absence from Sibyll had been passed, Hastings had somewhat recovered from her influence; and feeling the difficulties of reconciling his honour and his worldly prospects to further prosecution of the love, rashly expressed but not deeply felt, he had determined frankly to cut the Gordian knot he could not solve, and

inform Sibyll that marriage between them was impossible. With that view he had appointed this meeting, and his conference with the king but confirmed his intention.

It was in this state of mind that he was thus accosted by Alwyn:—

"My lord, may I make bold to ask, for a few moments, your charitable indulgence to words you may deem presumptuous."

"Be brief, then, Master Alwyn—I am waited for."

"Alas, my lord! I can guess by whom—by the one whom I seek myself—by Sibyll Warner?"

"How, Sir Goldsmith!" said Hastings, haughtily —"what knowest thou of my movements, and what care I for thine?"

"Hearken, my Lord Hastings—hearken!" said Alwyn, repressing his resentment, and in a voice so earnest that it riveted the entire attention of the listener —"hearken and judge not as noble judges craftsman, but as man should judge man. As the saw saith, 'We all lie alike in our graves.' From the first moment I saw this Sibyll Warner I loved her. Yes; smile disdainfully, but listen still. She was obscure and in distress. I loved her not for her fair looks alone—I loved her for her good gifts, for her patient industry, for her filial duty, for her struggles to give bread to her father's board. I did not say to myself, 'This girl will make a comely fere—a delicate paramour!' I said, 'This good daughter will make a wife whom an honest man may take to his heart and cherish.'" Poor Alwyn stopped, with tears in his voice, struggled with his emotions, and pursued: "My fortunes were more promising than hers; there was no cause why I might not hope. True, I had a rival then; young as myself—better born—

comelier; but she loved him not. I foresaw that his love for her—if love it were—would cease. Methought that her mind would understand mine; as mine—verily I say it—*yearned* for hers! I could not look on the maidens of mine own rank, and who had lived around me, but what—oh, no, my lord, again I say, *not* the beauty, but the gifts, the mind, the heart of Sibyll, threw them all into the shade. You may think it strange that I—a plain, steadfast, trading, working, careful man—should have all these feelings; but I will tell you wherefore such as I sometimes have them, nurse them, brood on them, more than you lords and gentlemen, with all your graceful arts in pleasing. We know no light loves! no brief distractions to the one arch passion! We sober sons of the stall and the ware are no general gallants—we love plainly, we love but once, and we love heartily. But who knows not the proverb, 'What's a gentleman but his pleasure?'—and what's pleasure but change? When Sibyll came to the palace, I soon heard her name linked with yours; I saw her cheek blush when you spoke. Well—well—well! after all, as the old wives tell us, 'blushing is virtue's livery.' I said, 'She is a chaste and high-hearted girl.' This will pass, and the time will come when she can compare your love and mine. Now, my lord, the time has come—I know that you seek her. Yea, at this moment, I know that her heart beats for your footstep. Say but one word—say that you love Sibyll Warner with the thought of wedding her—say *that*, on your honour, noble Hastings, as gentleman and peer, and I will kneel at your feet, and beg your pardon for my vain follies, and go back to my ware, and work, and not repine. Say it! You are silent! Then I implore you, still as peer and gentleman, to let the honest love save the maiden

from the wooing that will blight her peace and blast her name! And now, Lord Hastings, I wait your gracious answer."

The sensations experienced by Hastings, as Alwyn thus concluded, were manifold and complicated; but, at the first, admiration and pity were the strongest.

"My poor friend," said he, kindly, "if you thus love a demoiselle deserving all my reverence, your words and your thoughts bespeak you no unworthy pretender; but take my counsel, good Alwyn. Come not—thou from the Chepe—come not to the court for a wife. Forget this fantasy."

"My lord, it is impossible! Forget I cannot—regret I may."

"Thou canst not succeed, man," resumed the nobleman more coldly, "nor couldst if William Hastings had never lived. The eyes of women accustomed to gaze on the gorgeous externals of the world, are blinded to plain worth like thine. It might have been different had the donzell never abided in a palace; but, as it is, brave fellow, learn how these wounds of the heart scar over, and the spot becomes hard and callous evermore. What art thou, Master Nicholas Alwyn," continued Hastings, gloomily, and with a withering smile—"what art thou, to ask for a bliss denied to me—to all of us—the bliss of carrying poetry into life—youth into manhood, by winning—the First Loved? But think not, sir lover, that I say this in jealousy or disparagement. Look yonder, by the leafless elm, the white robe of Sibyll Warner. Go and plead thy suit."

"Do I understand you, my lord?" said Alwyn, somewhat confused and perplexed by the tone and the manner Hastings adopted. "Does report err, and you do not love this maiden?"

"Fair master," returned Hastings, scornfully, "thou hast no right that I trow of, to pry into my thoughts and secrets: I cannot acknowledge my judge in thee, good jeweller and goldsmith—enough, surely, in all courtesy, that I yield thee the precedence. Tell thy tale, as movingly, if thou wilt, as thou hast told it to me; say of me all that thou fanciest thou hast reason to suspect; and if, Master Alwyn, thou woo and win the lady, fail not to ask me to thy wedding!"

There was in this speech, and the bearing of the speaker, that superb levity, that inexpressible and conscious superiority—that cold ironical tranquillity—which awe and humble men more than grave disdain or imperious passion. Alwyn ground his teeth as he listened, and gazed in silent despair and rage upon the calm lord. Neither of these men could strictly be called handsome. Of the two, Alwyn had the advantage of more youthful prime, of a taller stature, of a more powerful, though less supple and graceful, frame. In their very dress, there was little of that marked distinction between classes which then usually prevailed, for the dark cloth tunic and surcoat of Hastings made a costume even simpler than the bright-coloured garb of the trader, with its broad trimmings of fur, and its aiglettes of elaborate lace. Between man and man, then, where was the visible, the mighty, the insurmountable difference in all that can charm the fancy and captivate the eye, which, as he gazed, Alwyn confessed to himself there existed between the two? Alas! how the distinctions least to be analysed are ever the sternest! What lofty ease in that high-bred air—what histories of triumph seemed to speak in that quiet eye, sleeping in its own imperious lustre—what magic of command in that pale brow—what spells of persuasion

in that artful lip! Alwyn muttered to himself, bowed his head involuntarily, and passed on at once from Hastings to Sibyll, who now, at the distance of some yards, had arrested her steps, in surprise to see the conference between the nobleman and the burgher.

But as he approached Sibyll, poor Alwyn felt all the firmness and courage he had exhibited with Hastings, melt away. And the trepidation which a fearful but deep affection ever occasions in men of his character, made his movements more than usually constrained and awkward, as he cowered beneath the looks of the maid he so truly loved.

"Seekest thou me, Master Alwyn?" asked Sibyll, gently, seeing that, though he paused by her side, he spoke not.

"I do," returned Alwyn, abruptly, and again he was silent.

At length, lifting his eyes and looking round him, he saw Hastings at the distance, leaning against the rampart, with folded arms, and the contrast of his rival's cold and arrogant indifference, and his own burning veins and bleeding heart, roused up his manly spirit, and gave to his tongue the eloquence which emotion gains when it once breaks the fetters it forges to itself.

"Look—look, Sibyll!" he said, pointing to Hastings —"look! that man you believe loves you?—if so—if he loved thee, would he stand yonder—mark him—aloof, contemptuous, careless—while he knew that I was by your side?"

Sibyll turned upon the goldsmith eyes full of innocent surprise—eyes that asked, plainly as eyes could speak—"And wherefore not, Master Alwyn?"

Alwyn so interpreted the look, and replied, as if she had spoken—"Because he must know how poor and

tame is that feeble fantasy which alone can come from a soul, worn bare with pleasure, to that which I feel and now own for thee—the love of youth, born of the heart's first vigour,—because he ought to fear that that love should prevail with thee,—because that love *ought* to prevail. Sibyll, between us, there are not imparity and obstacle. Oh, listen to me—listen still! Frown not—turn not away." And, stung and animated by the sight of his rival, fired by the excitement of a contest on which the bliss of his own life and the weal of Sibyll's might depend, his voice was as the cry of a mortal agony, and affected the girl to the inmost recesses of her soul.

"Oh, Alwyn, I frown not!" she said, sweetly—"oh, Alwyn, I turn not away! Woe is me to give pain to so kind and brave a heart; but——"

"No, speak not yet. I have studied thee—I have read thee as a scholar would read a book. I know thee proud—I know thee aspiring—I know thou art vain of thy gentle blood, and distasteful of my yeoman's birth. There, I am not blind to thy faults, but I love thee despite them; and to please those faults, I have toiled, schemed, dreamed, risen—I offer to thee the future with the certainty of a man who can command it. Wouldst thou wealth?—be patient (as ambition ever is): in a few years thou shalt have more gold than the wife of Lord Hastings can command; thou shalt lodge more statelily, fare more sumptuously;* thou shalt walk on cloth of gold if thou wilt! Wouldst thou titles?—I will win them. Richard de la Pole, who founded the

* This was no vain promise of Master Alwyn. At that time, a successful trader made a fortune with signal rapidity, and enjoyed greater luxuries than most of the barons. All the gold in the country flowed into the coffers of the London merchants.

greatest duchy in the realm, was poorer than I, when he first served in a merchant's ware. Gold buys all things now. Oh, would to heaven it could but buy me *thee!*"

"Master Alwyn, it is not gold that buys love. Be soothed. What can I say to thee to soften the harsh word 'Nay?'"

"You reject me, then, and at once. I ask not your hand now. I will wait, tarry, hope—I care not if for years;—wait till I can fulfil all I promise thee!"

Sibyll, affected to tears, shook her head mournfully; and there was a long and painful silence. Never was wooing more strangely circumstanced than this—the one lover pleading while the other was in view—the one, ardent, impassioned; the other, calm and passive—and the silence of the last, alas! having all the success which the words of the other lacked. It might be said that the choice before Sibyll was a type of the choice ever given, but in vain, to the child of genius. Here a secure and peaceful life—an honoured home—a tranquil lot, free from ideal visions, it is true, but free also from the doubt and the terror—the storms of passion;—there, the fatal influence of an affection, born of imagination, sinister, equivocal, ominous, but irresistible. And the child of genius fulfilled her destiny!

"Master Alwyn," said Sibyll, rousing herself to the necessary exertion, "I shall never cease gratefully to recall thy generous friendship—never cease to pray fervently for thy weal below. But for ever and for ever let this content thee—I can no more."

Impressed by the grave and solemn tone of Sibyll, Alwyn hushed the groan that struggled to his lips, and gloomily replied—"I obey you, fair mistress, and I return to my work-day life; but ere I go, I pray you misthink me not if I say this much;—not alone for

the bliss of hoping for a day in which I might call thee mine have I thus importuned—but, not less—I swear not less—from the soul's desire to save thee from what I fear will but lead to woe and wayment, to peril and pain, to weary days and sleepless nights. 'Better a little fire that warms than a great that burns.' Dost thou think that Lord Hastings, the vain, the dissolute——"

"Cease, sir!" said Sibyll, proudly; "me reprove if thou wilt, but lower not my esteem for thee by slander against another!"

"What!" said Alwyn, bitterly; "doth even one word of counsel chafe thee? I tell thee that if thou dreamest that Lord Hastings loves Sibyll Warner as man loves the maiden he would wed,—thou deceivest thyself to thine own misery. If thou wouldst prove it, go to him now—go and say, 'Wilt thou give me that home of peace and honour—that shelter for my father's old age under a son's roof which the trader I despise proffers me in vain?'"

"If it were already proffered me—by *him?*" said Sibyll, in a low voice, and blushing deeply.

Alwyn started. "Then I wronged him; and—and——" he added, generously, though with a faint sickness at his heart, "I can yet be happy in thinking *thou* art so. Farewell, maiden, the saints guard thee from one memory of regret at what hath passed between us!"

He pulled his bonnet hastily over his brows, and departed with unequal and rapid strides. As he passed the spot where Hastings stood leaning his arm upon the wall, and his face upon his hand, the nobleman looked up, and said—

"Well, Sir Goldsmith, own at least that thy trial hath

been a fair one!" Then struck with the anguish written upon Alwyn's face, he walked up to him, and, with a frank, compassionate impulse, laid his hand on his shoulder; "Alwyn," he said, "I have felt what you feel now—I have survived it, and the world hath not prospered with me less! Take with you a compassion that respects, and does not degrade you."

"Do not deceive her, my lord—she trusts and loves you! You never deceived man—the wide world says it—do not deceive woman! Deeds kill men—words women!" Speaking thus simply, Alwyn strode on, and vanished.

Hastings slowly and silently advanced to Sibyll. Her rejection of Alwyn had by no means tended to reconcile him to the marriage he himself had proffered. He might well suppose that the girl, even if unguided by affection, would not hesitate between a mighty nobleman and an obscure goldsmith. His pride was sorely wounded that the latter should have even thought himself the equal of one whom *he* had proposed, though but in a passionate impulse, to raise to his own state. And yet, as he neared Sibyll, and, with a light footstep, she sprang forward to meet him, her eyes full of sweet joy and confidence, he shrank from an avowal which must wither up a heart opening thus all its bloom of youth and love to greet him.

"Ah, fair lord," said the maiden, "was it kindly in thee to permit poor Alwyn to inflict on me so sharp a pain, and thou to stand calmly distant? Sure, alas! that had thy humble rival proffered a crown, it had been the same to Sibyll! Oh, how the grief it was mine to cause grieved me; and yet, through all, I had one selfish, guilty gleam of pleasure—to think that I had not been loved so well, if I were all unworthy the sole love I desire or covet!"

"And yet, Sibyll, this young man can in all, save wealth and a sounding name, give thee more than I can,—a heart undarkened by moody memories—a temper unsoured by the world's dread and bitter lore of man's frailty and earth's sorrow. Ye are not far separated by ungenial years, and might glide to a common grave hand in hand; but I, older in heart than in age, am yet so far thine elder in the last, that these hairs will be grey, and this form bent, while thy beauty is in its prime, and—but thou weepest!"

"I weep that thou shouldst bring one thought of time to sadden my thoughts, which are of eternity. Love knows no age—it foresees no grave! its happiness and its trust behold on the earth but one glory, melting into the hues of heaven, where they who love lastingly pass calmly on to live for ever! See, I weep not now!"

"And did not this honest burgher," pursued Hastings, softened and embarrassed, but striving to retain his cruel purpose, "tell thee to distrust me?—tell thee that my vows were false?"

"Methinks, if an angel told me so, I should disbelieve!"

"Why, look thee, Sibyll, suppose his warning true—suppose that at this hour I sought thee with intent to say that that destiny which ambition weaves for itself forbade me to fulfil a word hotly spoken? that I could not wed thee?—should I not seem to thee a false wooer—a poor trifler with thy earnest heart—and so, couldst thou not recall the love of him whose truer and worthier homage yet lingers in thine ear, and with him be happy?"

Sibyll lifted her dark eyes, yet humid, upon the unrevealing face of the speaker, and gazed on him with wistful and inquiring sadness, then, shrinking from

his side, she crossed her arms meekly on her bosom, and thus said—

"If ever, since we parted, one such thought hath glanced across thee—one thought of repentance at the sacrifice of pride, or the lessening of power—which (she faltered, broke off the sentence, and resumed)—in one word, if thou wouldst retract, say it now, and I will not accuse thy falsehood, but bless thy truth."

"Thou couldst be consoled, then, by thy pride of woman, for the loss of an unworthy lover?"

"My lord, are these questions fair?"

Hastings was silent. The gentler part of his nature struggled severely with the harder. The pride of Sibyll moved him no less than her trust; and her love in both was so evident—so deep—so exquisitely contrasting the cold and frivolous natures amidst which his lot had fallen—that he recoiled from casting away for ever a heart never to be replaced. Standing on that bridge of life, with age before and youth behind, he felt that never again could he be so loved, or, if so loved, by one so worthy of whatever of pure affection, of young romance, was yet left to his melancholy and lonely soul.

He took her hand, and, as she felt its touch, her firmness forsook her, her head drooped upon her bosom, and she burst into an agony of tears.

"Oh, Sibyll, forgive me! Smile on me again, Sibyll!" exclaimed Hastings, subdued and melted. But, alas! the heart once bruised and galled recovers itself but slowly, and it was many minutes before the softest words the eloquent lover could shape to sound sufficed to dry those burning tears, and bring back the enchanting smile,—nay, even then the smile was forced and joyless. They walked on for some moments, both

in thought, till Hastings said—"Thou lovest me, Sibyll, and art worthy of all the love that man can feel for maid; and yet, canst thou solve me this question, nor chide me that I ask it—Dost thou not love the world and the world's judgment more than me? What is that which women call honour? What makes them shrink from all love that takes not the form and circumstance of the world's hollow rites? Does love cease to be love, unless over its wealth of trust and emotion the priest mouths his empty blessing? Thou in thy graceful pride art angered if I, in wedding thee, should remember the sacrifice which men like me—I own it fairly—deem as great as man can make; and yet thou wouldst fly my love, if it wooed thee to a sacrifice of thine own."

Artfully was the question put, and Hastings smiled to himself in imagining the reply it must bring; and then Sibyll answered with the blush which the very subject called forth.

"Alas, my lord, I am but a poor casuist, but I feel that if I asked thee to forfeit whatever men respect,—honour, and repute for valour,—to be traitor and dastard, thou couldst love me no more; and marvel you, if when man woos woman to forfeit all that her sex holds highest—to be in woman what dastard and traitor is in man—she hears her conscience and her God speak in a louder voice than can come from a human lip? The goods and pomps of the world we are free to sacrifice, and true love heeds and counts them not; but true love cannot sacrifice that which makes up love—it cannot sacrifice the right to be loved below, the hope to love on in the realm above, the power to pray with a pure soul for the happiness it yearns to make, the blessing to seem ever good and honoured in the eyes of the one

by whom alone it would be judged—and therefore, sweet lord, true love never contemplates this sacrifice; and if once it believes itself truly loved, it trusts with a fearless faith in the love on which it leans."

"Sibyll, would to Heaven I had seen thee in my youth! Would to Heaven I were more worthy of thee!" And in that interview Hastings had no heart to utter what he had resolved—"Sibyll, I sought thee but to say, Farewell."

CHAPTER VI

WARWICK RETURNS — APPEASES A DISCONTENTED PRINCE — AND CONFERS WITH A REVENGEFUL CONSPIRATOR

It was not till late in the evening that Warwick arrived at his vast residence in London, where he found not only Marmaduke Nevile ready to receive him, but a more august expectant, in George Duke of Clarence. Scarcely had the earl crossed the threshold, when the duke seized his arm, and leading him into the room that adjoined the hall, said—

"Verily, Edward is besotted no less than ever by his wife's leech-like family. Thou knowest my appointment to the government of Ireland; Isabel, like myself, cannot endure the subordinate vassalage we must brook at the court, with the queen's cold looks and sour words. Thou knowest, also, with what vain pretexts Edward has put me off; and now, this very day, he tells me that he hath changed his humour—that I am not stern enough for the Irish kernes—that he loves me too well to banish me, forsooth; and that Worcester, the people's butcher, but the queen's favourite, must have the

post so sacredly pledged to me. I see, in this, Elizabeth's crafty malice. Is this struggle between king's blood and queen's kith to go on for ever?"

"Calm thyself, George; I will confer with the king to-morrow, and hope to compass thy not too arrogant desire. Certes, a king's brother is the fittest vice-king for the turbulent kernes of Ireland, who are ever flattered into obeisance by ceremony and show. The government was pledged to thee—Edward can scarcely be serious. Moreover, Worcester, though forsooth a learned man—(*Mort-Dieu!* methinks that same learning fills the head to drain the heart!)—is so abhorred for his cruelties, that his very landing in Ireland will bring a new rebellion to add to our already festering broils and sores. Calm thyself, I say. Where didst thou leave Isabel?"

"With my mother."

"And Anne?—the queen chills not her young heart with cold grace?"

"Nay—the queen dare not unleash her malice against Edward's will; and, to do him justice, he hath shown all honour to Lord Warwick's daughter."

"He is a gallant prince, with all his faults," said the father, heartily, "and we must bear with him, George; for verily he hath bound men by a charm to love him. Stay, thou, and share my hasty repast, and over the wine we will talk of thy views. Spare me now for a moment; I have to prepare work eno' for a sleepless night. This Lincolnshire rebellion promises much trouble. Lord Willoughby has joined it—more than twenty thousand men are in arms. I have already sent to convene the knights and barons on whom the king can best depend, and must urge their instant departure for their halls, to raise men and meet the foe. While

Edward feasts, his minister must toil. Tarry awhile till I return."

The earl re-entered the hall, and beckoned to Marmaduke, who stood amongst a group of squires.

"Follow me, I may have work for thee." Warwick took a taper from one of the servitors, and led the way to his own more private apartment. On the landing of the staircase by a small door, stood his body squire—"Is the prisoner within?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Good!"—The earl opened the door by which the squire had mounted guard, and bade Marmaduke wait without.

The inmate of the chamber, whose dress bore the stains of fresh travel and hard riding, lifted his face hastily as the earl entered.

"Robin Hilyard," said Warwick, "I have mused much how to reconcile my service to the king with the gratitude I owe to a man who saved me from great danger. In the midst of thy unhappy and rebellious designs thou wert captured and brought to me; the papers found on thee attest a Lancastrian revolt; so ripening towards a mighty gathering—and so formidable from the adherents whom the gold and intrigues of King Louis have persuaded to risk land and life for the Red Rose, that all the king's friends can do to save his throne is now needed. In this revolt thou hast been the scheming brain, the master hand, the match to the bombard, the firebrand to the flax. Thou smilest, man! Alas! seest thou not that it is my stern duty to send thee bound hand and foot before the king's council—for the brake to wring from thee thy guilty secrets, and the gibbet to close thy days?"

"I am prepared," said Hilyard; "when the bombard

explodes, the match has become useless—when the flame smites the welkin, the firebrand is consumed!"

"Bold man! what seest thou in this rebellion that can profit thee?"

"I see, looming through the chasms and rents, made in the feudal order by civil war—the giant image of a free people."

"And thou wouldst be a martyr for the multitude, who deserted thee at Olney?"

"As thou for the king, who dishonoured thee at Shene!"

Warwick frowned, and there was a moment's pause; at last, said the earl—"Look you, Robin, I would fain not have on my hands the blood of a man who saved my life. I believe thee, though a fanatic and half madman—I believe thee true in word, as rash of deed. Swear to me on the cross of this dagger, that thou wilt lay aside all scheme and plot for this rebellion, all aid and share in civil broil and dissension, and thy life and liberty are restored to thee. In that intent, I have summoned my own kinsman, Marmaduke Nevile. He waits without the door—he shall conduct thee safely to the sea-shore—thou shalt gain in peace my government of Calais, and my seneschal there shall find thee all thou canst need—meat for thy hunger and moneys for thy pastime. Accept my mercy—take the oath, and begone."

"My lord," answered Hilyard, much touched and affected—"blame not thyself if this carcase feed the crows—my blood be on mine own head! I cannot take this oath; I cannot live in peace; strife and broil are grown to me food and drink. Oh, my lord! thou knowest not what dark and baleful memories made me an agent in God's hand against this ruthless Ed-

ward;" and then passionately, with whitening lips and convulsive features, Hilyard recounted to the startled Warwick the same tale which had roused the sympathy of Adam Warner.

The earl, whose affections were so essentially homely and domestic, was even more shocked than the scholar by the fearful narrative.

"Unhappy man!" he said, with moistened eyes—"from the core of my heart I pity thee. But thou, the scathed sufferer from civil war, wilt *thou* be now its dread reviver?"

"If Edward had wronged thee, great earl, as me, poor franklin, what would be thine answer? In vain moralise to him whom the spectre of a murdered child and the shriek of a maniac wife haunt and hound on to vengeance! So send me to rack and halter. Be there one curse more on the soul of Edward!"

"Thou shalt not die through my witness," said the earl, abruptly; and he quitted the chamber.

Securing the door by a heavy bolt on the outside, he gave orders to his squire to attend to the comforts of the prisoner; and then turning into his closet with Marmaduke, said—"I sent for thee, young cousin, with design to commit to thy charge one whose absence from England I deemed needful—that design I must abandon. Go back to the palace, and see, if thou canst, the king before he sleeps—say that this rising in Lincolnshire is more than a riot; it is the first burst of a revolution! that I hold council here to-night, and every shire, ere the morrow, shall have its appointed captain. I will see the king at morning. Yet stay—gain sight of my child Anne; she will leave the court to-morrow. I will come for her—bid her train be prepared; she and the countess must away to Calais—England again hath

ceased to be a home for women! What to do with this poor rebel?" muttered the earl, when alone; "release him I cannot, slay him I will not. Hum—there is space enough in these walls to enclose a captive."

CHAPTER VII

THE FEAR AND THE FLIGHT

King Edward feasted high, and Sibyll sat in her father's chamber—she silent with thought of love, Adam silent in the toils of science. The Eureka was well-nigh finished—rising from its ruins, more perfect, more elaborate, than before. Maiden and scholar, each seeming near to the cherished goal—one to love's genial altar, the other to fame's lonely shrine.

Evening advanced—night began—night deepened. King Edward's feast was over, but still in his perfumed chamber the wine sparkled in the golden cup. It was announced to him that Sir Marmaduke Nevile, just arrived from the earl's house, craved an audience. The king, preoccupied in deep reverie, impatiently postponed it till the morrow.

"To-morrow!" said the gentleman in attendance. "Sir Marmaduke bids me to say, fearful that the late hour would forbid his audience, that Lord Warwick himself will visit your grace. I fear, sire, that the disturbances are great indeed, for the squires and gentlemen in Lady Anne's train have orders to accompany her to Calais to-morrow."

"To-morrow, to-morrow!" repeated the king—"well, sir, you are dismissed."

The Lady Anne (to whom Sibyll had previously com-

municated the king's kindly consideration for Master Warner) had just seen Marmaduke, and learned the new dangers that awaited the throne and the realm. The Lancastrians were then openly in arms for the prince of her love, and against her mighty father!

The Lady Anne sat awhile, sorrowful and musing, and then, before yon crucifix, the Lady Anne knelt in prayer.

Sir Marmaduke Nevile descends to the court below, and some three or four busy, curious gentlemen, not yet abed, seize him by the arm, and pray him to say what storm is in the wind.

The night deepened still—the wine is drained in King Edward's goblet—King Edward has left his chamber—and Sibyll, entreating her father, but in vain, to suspend his toil, has kissed the damps from his brow, and is about to retire to her neighbouring room. She has turned to the threshold, when, hark! a faint—a distant cry, a woman's shriek, the noise of a clapping door! The voice—it is the voice of Anne! Sibyll passed the threshold—she is in the corridor—the winter moon shines through the open arches—the air is white and cold with frost. Suddenly the door at the farther end is thrown wide open, a form rushes into the corridor, it passes Sibyll, halts, turns round—"Oh, Sibyll!" cried the Lady Anne, in a voice wild with horror, "save me—aid—help! Merciful Heaven, the king!"

Instinctively, wonderingly, tremblingly, Sibyll drew Anne into the chamber she had just quitted, and as they gained its shelter—as Anne sank upon the floor, the gleam of cloth of gold flashed through the dim atmosphere, and Edward, yet in the royal robe in which he had dazzled all the eyes at his kingly feast, stood within

the chamber. His countenance was agitated with passion, and its clear hues flushed red with wine. At his entrance, Anne sprang from the door, and rushed to Warner, who, in dumb bewilderment, had suspended his task, and stood before the Eureka, from which steamed and rushed the dark rapid smoke, while round and round, labouring and groaning, rolled its fairy wheels.*

"Sir," cried Anne, clinging to him convulsively. "You are a father—by your child's soul, protect Lord Warwick's daughter!"

Roused from his abstraction by this appeal, the poor scholar wound his arm round the form thus clinging to him, and raising his head with dignity, replied, "Thy name, youth, and sex protect thee!"

"Unhand that lady, vile sorcerer," exclaimed the king—"*I* am her protector. Come, Anne, sweet Anne, fair lady—thou mistakest—come!" he whispered. "Give not to these low natures matter for guesses that do but shame thee. Let thy king and cousin lead thee back to thy sweet rest."

He sought, though gently, to loosen the arms that wound themselves round the old man; but Anne, not heeding, not listening, distracted by a terror that seemed to shake her whole frame, and to threaten her very reason, continued to cry out loudly upon her father's name—her great father, wakeful, then, for the baffled ravisher's tottering throne!

Edward had still sufficient possession of his reason to be alarmed lest some loiterer or sentry in the outer court

* The gentle reader will doubtless bear in mind that Master Warner's complicated model had but little resemblance to the models of the steam-engine in our own day, and that it was usually connected with other contrivances, for the better display of the principle it was intended to illustrate.

might hear the cries which his attempts to soothe but the more provoked. Grinding his teeth, and losing patience, he said to Adam, "Thou knowest me, friend —I am thy king. Since the Lady Anne, in her bewilderment, prefers thine aid to mine, help to bear her back to her apartment; and thou, young mistress, lend thine arm. This wizard's den is no fit chamber for our high-born guest."

"No, no; drive me not hence, Master Warner—That man—that king—give me not up to his—his——"

"Beware!" exclaimed the king.

It was not till now that Adam's simple mind comprehended the true cause of Anne's alarm, which Sibyll still conjectured not, but stood trembling by her friend's side, and close to her father.

"Do not fear, maiden," said Adam Warner, laying his hand upon the loosened locks that swept over his bosom, "for though I am old and feeble, God and his angels are in every spot where virtue trembles and resists. My lord king, thy sceptre extends not over a human soul!"

"Dotard, prate not to me!" said Edward, laying his hand on his dagger.

Sibyll saw the movement, and instinctively placed herself between her father and the king. That slight form, those pure, steadfast eyes, those features, noble at once and delicate, recalled to Edward the awe which had seized him in his first dark design; and again that awe came over him. He retreated.

"I mean harm to none," said he, almost submissively; "and if I am so unhappy as to scare with my presence the Lady Anne, I will retire, praying you, donzell, to see to her state, and lead her back to her chamber when it so pleases herself. Saying this much,

I command you, old man, and you, maiden, to stand back while I but address one sentence to the Lady Anne."

With these words he gently advanced to Anne, and took her hand; but, snatching it from him, the poor lady broke from Adam, rushed to the casement, opened it, and seeing some figures indistinct and distant in the court below, she called out in a voice of such sharp agony, that it struck remorse and even terror into Edward's soul.

"Alas!" he muttered, "she will not listen to me, her mind is distraught! What frenzy has been mine! Pardon—pardon, Anne—oh, pardon!"

Adam Warner laid his hand on the king's arm, and he drew the imperious despot away as easily as a nurse leads a docile child.

"King!" said the brave old man, "may God pardon thee, for if the last evil hath been wrought upon this noble lady, David sinned not more heavily than thou."

"She is pure—inviolate—I swear it!" said the king, humbly. "Anne, only say that I am forgiven."

But Anne spoke not: her eyes were fixed—her lips had fallen—she was insensible as a corpse—dumb and frozen with her ineffable dread. Suddenly steps were heard upon the stairs; the door opened, and Marmaduke Nevile entered abruptly.

"Surely I heard my lady's voice—surely! What marvel this?—the king! Pardon, my liege!"—and he bent his knee.

The sight of Marmaduke dissolved the spell of awe and repentant humiliation, which had chained a king's dauntless heart. His wonted guile returned to him with his self-possession.

"Our wise craftsman's strange and weird inven-

tion"—(and Edward pointed to the Eureka)—"has scared our fair cousin's senses, as, by sweet St. George, it well might! Go back, Sir Marmaduke, we will leave Lady Anne for the moment to the care of Mistress Sibyll. Donzell, remember my command. Come, sir" —(and he drew the wondering Marmaduke from the chamber)—but as soon as he had seen the knight descend the stairs and regain the court, he returned to the room, and in a low stern voice, said—"Look you, Master Warner, and you, damsel, if ever either of ye breathe one word of what has been your dangerous fate to hear and witness, kings have but one way to punish slanderers, and silence but one safeguard—trifle not with death!"

He then closed the door, and resought his own chamber. The Eastern spices, which were burned in the sleeping-rooms of the great, still made the air heavy with their feverish fragrance. The king seated himself, and strove to recollect his thoughts, and examine the peril he had provoked. The resistance and the terror of Anne had effectually banished from his heart the guilty passion it had before harboured; for emotions like his, and in such a nature, are quick of change. His prevailing feeling was one of sharp repentance and reproachful shame. But, as he roused himself from a state of mind which light characters ever seek to escape, the image of the dark-browed earl rose before him, and fear succeeded to mortification; but even this, however well-founded, could not endure long in a disposition so essentially scornful of all danger. Before morning the senses of Anne must return to her. So gentle a bosom could be surely reasoned out of resentment, or daunted, at least, from betraying to her stern father a secret that, if told, would smear the sward of

England with the gore of thousands. What woman will provoke war and bloodshed? And for an evil not wrought—for a purpose not fulfilled? The king was grateful that his victim had escaped him. He would see Anne before the earl could, and appease her anger —obtain her silence! For Warner and for Sibyll, they would not dare to reveal; and, if they did, the lips that accuse a king soon belie themselves, while a rack can torture truth, and the doomsman be the only judge between the subject and the head that wears a crown!

Thus reasoning with himself, his soul faced the solitude. Meanwhile Marmaduke regained the courtyard, where, as we have said, he had been detained in conferring with some of the gentlemen in the king's service, who, hearing that he brought important tidings from the earl, had abstained from rest till they could learn if the progress of the new rebellion would bring their swords into immediate service. Marmaduke, pleased to be of importance, had willingly satisfied their curiosity, as far as he was able, and was just about to retire to his own chamber, when the cry of Anne had made him enter the postern-door which led up the stairs to Adam's apartment, and which was fortunately not locked; and now, on returning, he had again a new curiosity to allay. Having briefly said that Master Warner had taken that untoward hour to frighten the women with a machine that vomited smoke and howled piteously, Marmaduke dismissed the group to their beds, and was about to seek his own, when, looking once more towards the casement, he saw a white hand gleaming in the frosty moonlight, and beckoning to him.

The knight crossed himself, and reluctantly ascended the stairs, and re-entered the wizard's den.

The Lady Anne had so far recovered herself, that a kind of unnatural calm had taken possession of her mind, and changed her ordinary sweet and tractable nature into one stern, obstinate resolution,—to escape, if possible, that unholy palace. And as soon as Marmaduke re-entered, Anne met him at the threshold, and laying her hand convulsively on his arm, said—"By the name you bear—by your love to my father, aid me to quit these walls."

In great astonishment, Marmaduke stared, without reply.

"Do you deny me, sir?" said Anne, almost sternly.

"Lady and mistress mine," answered Marmaduke, "I am your servant in all things. Quit these walls—the palace!—How?—the gates are closed. Nay, and what would my lord say, if at night——"

"*If at night!*" repeated Anne, in a hollow voice; and then pausing, burst into a terrible laugh. Recovering herself abruptly, she moved to the door—"I will go forth alone, and trust in God and Our Lady."

Sibyll sprang forward to arrest her steps, and Marmaduke hastened to Adam, and whispered—"Poor lady, is her mind unsettled? Hast thou, in truth, distracted her with thy spells and glamour?"

"Hush!" answered the old man; and he whispered in the Nevile's ear.

Scarcely had the knight caught the words, than his cheek paled—his eyes flashed fire. "The great earl's daughter!" he exclaimed—"infamy—horror—she is right!" He broke from the student, approached Anne, who still struggled with Sibyll, and kneeling before her, said, in a voice choked with passions at once fierce and tender—

"Lady, you are right. Unseemly it may be for one

of your quality and sex to quit this place with me, and alone; but at least I have a man's heart—a knight's honour. Trust to me your safety, noble maiden, and I will cut your way, even through yon foul king's heart, to your great father's side!"

Anne did not seem quite to understand his words, but she smiled on him as he knelt, and gave him her hand. The responsibility he had assumed quickened all the intellect of the young knight. As he took and kissed the hand extended to him, he felt the ring upon his finger—the ring entrusted to him by Alwyn—the king's signet-ring, before which would fly open every gate. He uttered a joyous exclamation, loosened his long night-cloak, and praying Anne to envelop her form in its folds, drew the hood over her head;—he was about to lead her forth, when he halted suddenly.

"Alack," said he, turning to Sibyll, "even though we may escape the Tower, no boatman now can be found on the river. The way through the streets is dark and perilous, and beset with midnight ruffians."

"Verily," said Warner, "the danger is past now. Let the noble demoiselle rest here till morning. The king dare not again——"

"Dare not!" interrupted Marmaduke. "Alas! you little know King Edward."

At that name Anne shuddered, opened the door, and hurried down the stairs; Sibyll and Marmaduke followed her.

"Listen, Sir Marmaduke," said Sibyll. "Close without the Tower is the house of a noble lady, the Dame of Longueville, where Anne may rest in safety, while you seek Lord Warwick. I will go with you, if you can obtain egress for us both."

"Brave damsel!" said Marmaduke, with emotion—

"but your own safety—the king's anger—no—besides a third, your dress not concealed, would create the warder's suspicion. Describe the house."

"The third to the left, by the river's side, with an arched porch, and the fleur-de-lis embossed on the walls."

"It is not so dark but we shall find it. Fare you well, gentle mistress."

While they yet spoke, they had both reached the side of Anne. Sibyll still persisted in the wish to accompany her friend; but Marmaduke's representation on the peril to life itself, that might befall her father, if Edward learned she had abetted Anne's escape, finally prevailed. The knight and his charge gained the outer gate.

"Haste—haste, Master Warder!" he cried, beating at the door with his dagger till it opened jealously—"messages of importance to the Lord Warwick. We have the king's signet. Open!"

The sleepy warder glanced at the ring—the gates were opened: they were without the fortress—they hurried on.

"Cheer up, noble lady; you are safe—you shall be avenged!" said Marmaduke, as he felt the steps of his companion falter.

But the reaction had come. The effort Anne had hitherto made was for escape—for liberty; the strength ceased, the object gained;—her head drooped—she muttered a few incoherent words, and then sense and life left her. Marmaduke paused in great perplexity and alarm. But lo, a light in a house before him!—That house the third to the river—the only one with the arched porch described by Sibyll. He lifted the light and holy burthen in his strong arms—he gained

the door: to his astonishment, it was open—a light burned on the stairs—he heard, in the upper room, the sound of whispered voices, and quick, soft footsteps hurrying to and fro. Still bearing the insensible form of his companion, he ascended the staircase, and entered at once upon a chamber, in which, by a dim lamp, he saw some two or three persons assembled round a bed in the recess. A grave man advanced to him, as he paused at the threshold—

"Whom seek you?"

"The Lady Longueville."

"Hush!"

"Who needs me?" said a faint voice, from the curtained recess.

"My name is Nevile," answered Marmaduke, with straightforward brevity. "Mistress Sibyll Warner told me of this house, where I come for an hour's shelter to my companion, the Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Warwick."

Marmaduke resigned his charge to an old woman, who was the nurse in that sick chamber, and who lifted the hood, and chafed the pale, cold hands of the young maiden; the knight then strode to the recess. The Lady of Longueville was on the bed of death—an illness of two days had brought her to the brink of the grave—but there was in her eye and countenance a restless and preternatural animation, and her voice was clear and shrill, as she said—

"Why does the daughter of Warwick, the Yorkist, seek refuge in the house of the fallen and childless Lancastrian?"

"Swear, by thy hopes in Christ, that thou wilt tend and guard her while I seek the earl, and I reply."

"Stranger, my name is Longueville—my birth noble

—those pledges of hospitality and trust are stronger than hollow oaths. Say on!"

"Because, then," whispered the knight, after waving the bystanders from the spot—"because the earl's daughter flies dishonour in a king's palace, and her insulter is the king!"

Before the dying woman could reply, Anne, recovered by the cares of the experienced nurse, suddenly sprang to the recess, and kneeling by the bedside, exclaimed, wildly—

"Save me!—hide me!—save me!"

"Go and seek the earl, whose right hand destroyed my house and his lawful sovereign's throne—go! I will live till he arrives!" said the childless widow, and a wild gleam of triumph shot over her haggard features.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GROUP ROUND THE DEATH-BED OF THE LANCASTRIAN WIDOW

The dawning sun gleamed through grey clouds upon a small troop of men, armed in haste, who were grouped round a covered litter by the outer door of the Lady Longueville's house; while in the death-chamber, the Earl of Warwick, with a face as pale as the dying woman's, stood beside the bed—Anne calmly leaning on his breast, her eyes closed, and tears yet moist on their long fringes.

"Ay—ay—ay!" said the Lancastrian noblewoman, "ye men of wrath and turbulence, should reap what ye have sown! *This* is the king for whom ye dethroned the sainted Henry! *this* the man for whom ye poured

forth the blood of England's best! Ha!—ha!—Look down from heaven, my husband, my martyr-sons! The daughter of your mightiest foe flies to this lonely hearth—flies to the death-bed of the powerless woman for refuge from the foul usurper whom that foe placed upon the throne!"

"Spare me," muttered Warwick, in a low voice, and between his grinded teeth. The room had been cleared, and Doctor Godard (the grave man who had first accosted Marmaduke, and who was the priest summoned to the dying) alone—save the scarce conscious Anne herself—witnessed the ghastly and awful conference.

"Hush, daughter," said the man of peace, lifting the solemn crucifix—"calm thyself to holier thoughts."

The lady impatiently turned from the priest, and grasping the strong right arm of Warwick with her shrivelled and trembling fingers, resumed, in a voice that struggled to repress the gasps which broke its breath—

"But thou—oh, thou, wilt bear this indignity! thou, the chief of England's barons, wilt see no dishonour in the rank love of the vilest of England's kings! Oh, yes, ye Yorkists have the hearts of varlets—not of men and fathers!"

"By the symbol from which thou turnest, woman!" exclaimed the earl, giving vent to the fury which the presence of death had before suppressed—"by Him, to whom, morning and night, I have knelt in grateful blessing for the virtuous life of this beloved child, I will have such revenge on the recreant whom I kinged, as shall live in the Rolls of England till the trump of the Judgment Angel!"

"Father," said Anne, startled by her father's vehemence, from her half-swoon sleep—"Father, think

no more of the past—take me to my mother! I want the clasp of my mother's arms!"

"Leave us—leave the dying, Sir Earl and son," said Godard. "I, too, am Lancastrian—I too would lay down my life for the holy Henry; but I shudder, in the hour of death, to hear yon pale lips, that should pray for pardon, preach to thee of revenge."

"Revenge!" shrieked out the Dame of Longueville, as, sinking fast and fast, she caught the word—"Revenge! Thou hast sworn revenge on Edward of York, Lord Warwick—sworn it, in the chamber of death—in the ear of one who will carry that word to the herodead of a hundred battle-fields! Ha!—the sun has risen! Priest—Godard—thine arms—support—raise—bear me to the casement! Quick—quick! I would see my king once more! Quick—quick! and then—*then*—I will hear thee pray!"

The priest, half chiding, yet half in pity, bore the dying woman to the casement. She motioned to him to open it; he obeyed. The sun, just above the welkin, shone over the lordly Thames, gilded the gloomy fortress of the Tower, and glittered upon the window of Henry's prison.

"There—there! It is he—it is my king! Hither—lord, rebel earl—hither. Behold your sovereign. Repent, revenge!"

With her livid and outstretched hand, the Lancastrian pointed to the huge Wakefield Tower. The earl's dark eye beheld in the dim distance a pale and reverend countenance, recognized even from afar. The dying woman fixed her glazing eyes upon the wronged and mighty baron, and suddenly her arm fell to her side, the face became set as into stone, the last breath of life gurgled within, and fled—and still those glazing eyes

With her livid and outstretched hand the Lancastrian pointed to the huge Wakefield Tower.

were fixed on the earl's hueless face: and still in his ear, and echoed by a thousand passions in his heart—thrilled the word which had superseded prayer, and in which the sinner's soul had flown—REVENGE!

BOOK IX

THE WANDERERS AND THE EXILES

CHAPTER I

HOW THE GREAT BARON BECOMES AS GREAT A REBEL

Hilyard was yet asleep in the chamber assigned to him as his prison, when a rough grasp shook off his slumbers, and he saw the earl before him, with a countenance so changed from its usual open majesty—so dark and sombre, that he said, involuntarily, "You send me to the doomsman—I am ready!"

"Hist, man! Thou hatest Edward of York?"

"An' it were my last word—yes!"

"Give me thy hand—we are friends! Stare not at me with those eyes of wonder—ask not the why nor wherefore! This last night gave Edward a rebel more in Richard Nevile! A steed waits thee at my gates—ride fast to young Sir Robert Welles with this letter. Bid him not be dismayed; bid him hold out—for ere many days are past, Lord Warwick, and it may be, also, the Duke of Clarence, will join their force with his. Mark, I say not that I am for Henry of Lancaster—I say only that I am against Edward of York. Farewell, and when we meet again, blessed be the arm that first cuts its way to a tyrant's heart!"

Without another word, Warwick left the chamber. Hilyard, at first, could not believe his senses; but as he dressed himself in haste, he pondered over all those

causes of dissension which had long notoriously subsisted between Edward and the earl, and rejoiced that the prophecy he had long so shrewdly hazarded was at last fulfilled. Descending the stairs, he gained the gate, where Marmaduke awaited him, while a groom held a stout *haquenée* (as the common riding-horse was then called), whose points and breeding promised speed and endurance.

"Mount, Master Robin," said Marmaduke; "I little thought we should ever ride as friends together! Mount—our way for some miles out of London is the same. You go into Lincolnshire—I into the shire of Hertford."

"And for the same purpose?" asked Hilyard, as he sprang upon his horse, and the two men rode briskly on.

"Yes!"

"Lord Warwick is changed at last."

"At last!"

"For long?"

"Till death!"

"Good—I ask no more!"

A sound of hoofs behind made the franklin turn his head, and he saw a goodly troop, armed to the teeth, emerge from the earl's house and follow the lead of Marmaduke.

Meanwhile Warwick was closeted with Montagu.

Worldly as the latter was, and personally attached to Edward, he was still keenly alive to all that touched the honour of his house; and his indignation at the deadly insult offered to his niece was even more loudly expressed than that of the fiery earl.

"To deem," he exclaimed, "to deem Elizabeth Woodville worthy of his throne, and to see in Anne Nevile one only worthy to be his leman!"

"Ay!" said the earl, with a calmness perfectly terrible, from its unnatural contrast to his ordinary heat, when but slightly chafed, "Ay! thou sayest it! But be tranquil—cold—cold as iron, and as hard! We must *scheme* now, not storm and threaten—I never schemed before! You are right—honesty is a fool's policy! Would I had known this but an hour before the news reached me! I have already dismissed our friends to their different districts, to support King Edward's cause—he is still king—a little while longer king! Last night, I dismissed them—last night, at the very hour when—O God, give me patience!" He paused, and added, in a low voice, "Yet—yet—how long the moments are—how long! Ere the sun sets, Edward, I trust, will be in my power!"

"How!"

"He goes, to-day, to the More—he will not go the less for what hath chanced; he will trust to the archbishop to make his peace with me—churchmen are not fathers! Marmaduke Nevile hath my orders—a hundred armed men, who would march against the fiend himself, if I said the word, will surround the More, and seize the guest!"

"But what then? Who, *if* Edward, I dare not say the word;—*who is to succeed him?*"

"Clarence is the male heir!"

"But with what face to the people—proclaim——"

"There—there it is!" interrupted Warwick. "I have thought of that—I have thought of all things; my mind seems to have traversed worlds since daybreak! True! all commotion to be successful must have a cause that men can understand. Nevertheless, you, Montagu—you have a smoother tongue than I; go to our friends—to those who hate Edward—seek them, sound them!"

"And name to them Edward's infamy!"

"'Sdeath, dost thou think it! Thou, a Monthermer and Montagu: proclaim to England the foul insult to the hearth of an English gentleman and peer! feed every ribald Bourdour with song and roundel of Anne's virgin shame! how King Edward stole to her room at the dead of night, and wooed and pressed, and swore, and—God of Heaven, that this hand were on his throat! No, brother, no! there are some wrongs we may not tell—tumours and swellings of the heart, which are eased not till blood can flow!"

During this conference between the brothers, Edward, in his palace, was seized with consternation and dismay on hearing that the Lady Anne could not be found in her chamber. He sent forthwith to summon Adam Warner to his presence, and learned from the simple sage, who concealed nothing, the mode in which Anne had fled from the Tower. The king abruptly dismissed Adam, after a few hearty curses and vague threats; and awaking to the necessity of inventing some plausible story, to account to the wonder of the court for the abrupt disappearance of his guest, he saw that the person who could best originate and circulate such a tale was the queen; and he sought her at once, with the resolution to choose his confidant in the connection most rarely honoured by marital trust, in similar offences. He, however, so softened his narrative as to leave it but a venial error. He had been indulging over-freely in the wine-cup—he had walked into the corridor, for the refreshing coolness of the air—he had seen the figure of a female whom he did not recognise; and a few gallant words, he scarce remembered what, had been misconstrued. On perceiving whom he had thus addressed, he had sought to soothe the anger or

alarm of the Lady Anne; but still mistaking his intention, she had hurried into Warner's chamber—he had followed her thither—and now she had fled the palace. Such was his story, told lightly and laughingly, but ending with a grave enumeration of the dangers his imprudence had incurred.

Whatever Elizabeth felt, or however she might interpret the confession, she acted with her customary discretion; affected, after a few tender reproaches, to place implicit credit in her lord's account, and volunteered to prevent all scandal by the probable story, that the earl, being prevented from coming in person for his daughter, as he had purposed, by fresh news of the rebellion which might call him from London with the early day, had commissioned his kinsman, Marmaduke, to escort her home. The quick perception of her sex told her that, whatever licence might have terrified Anne into so abrupt a flight, the haughty earl would shrink no less than Edward himself from making public an insult which slander could well distort into the dishonour of his daughter; and that whatever pretext might be invented, Warwick would not deign to contradict it. And as, despite Elizabeth's hatred to the earl, and desire of permanent breach between Edward and his minister, she could not, as queen, wife, and woman, but be anxious that some cause more honourable in Edward, and less odious to the people, should be assigned for quarrel,—she earnestly recommended the king to repair at once to the More, as had been before arranged, and to spare no pains, disdain no expressions of penitence and humiliation, to secure the mediation of the archbishop. His mind somewhat relieved by this interview and counsel, the king kissed Elizabeth with affectionate gratitude, and returned to

his chamber to prepare for his departure to the archbishop's palace. But then remembering that Adam and Sibyll possessed his secret, he resolved at once to banish them from the Tower. For a moment he thought of the dungeons of his fortress—of the rope of his doomsman; but his conscience at that hour was sore and vexed. His fierceness humbled by the sense of shame, he shrunk from a new crime; and, moreover, his strong common sense assured him that the testimony of a shunned and abhorred wizard ceased to be of weight the moment it was deprived of the influence it took from the protection of a king. He gave orders for a boat to be in readiness by the gate of St. Thomas, again summoned Adam into his presence, and said, briefly, "Master Warner, the London mechanics cry so loudly against thine invention, for lessening labour and starving the poor, the sailors on the wharfs are so mutinous at the thought of vessels without rowers, that, as a good king is bound, I yield to the voice of my people. Go home, then, at once; the queen dispenses with thy fair daughter's service—the damsel accompanies thee. A boat awaits ye at the stairs; a guard shall attend ye to your house. Think what has passed within these walls has been a dream; a dream that, if told, is deathful—if concealed and forgotten, hath no portent!"

Without waiting a reply, the king called from the ante-room one of his gentlemen, and gave him special directions as to the departure and conduct of the worthy scholar and his gentle daughter. Edward next summoned before him the warder of the gate, learned that he alone was privy to the mode of his guest's flight, and deeming it best to leave at large no commentator on the tale he had invented, sentenced

the astonished warder to three months' solitary imprisonment—for appearing before him with soiled hosen! An hour afterwards, the king, with a small though gorgeous retinue, was on his way to the More.

The archbishop had, according to his engagement, assembled in his palace the more powerful of the discontented seigneurs; and his eloquence had so worked upon them, that Edward beheld, on entering the hall, only countenances of cheerful loyalty and respectful welcome. After the first greetings, the prelate, according to the custom of the day, conducted Edward into a chamber, that he might refresh himself with a brief rest and the bath, previous to the banquet.

Edward seized the occasion, and told his tale; but, however softened, enough was left to create the liveliest dismay in his listener. The lofty scaffolding of hope, upon which the ambitious prelate was to mount to the papal throne seemed to crumble into the dust. The king and the earl were equally necessary to the schemes of George Nevile. He chid the royal layman with more than priestly unction for his offence; but Edward so humbly confessed his fault, that the prelate at length relaxed his brow, and promised to convey his penitent assurances to the earl.

"Not an hour should be lost," he said; "the only one who can soothe his wrath is your highness's mother, our noble kinswoman. Permit me to despatch to her grace a letter, praying her to seek the earl, while I write by the same courier to himself."

"Be it all as you will," said Edward, doffing his surcoat, and dipping his hands in a perfumed ewer, "I shall not know rest till I have knelt to the Lady Anne, and won her pardon."

The prelate retired, and scarcely had he left the room

when Sir John Ratcliffe,* one of the king's retinue, and in waiting on his person, entered the chamber, pale and trembling.

"My liege," he said, in a whisper, "I fear some deadly treason awaits you. I have seen, amongst the trees below this tower, the gleam of steel; I have crept through the foliage, and counted no less than a hundred armed men—their leader is Sir Marmaduke Nevile, Earl Warwick's kinsman!"

"Ha!" muttered the king, and his bold face fell—"comes the earl's revenge so soon?"

"And," continued Ratcliffe, "I overheard Sir Marmaduke say, 'The door of the Garden Tower is unguarded—wait the signal!' Fly, my liege! Hark! even now, I hear the rattling of arms!"

The king stole to the casement—the day was closing; the foliage grew thick and dark around the wall; he saw an armed man emerge from the shade—a second, and a third.

"You are right, Ratcliffe! Flight—but how?"

"This way, my liege. By the passage I entered, a stair winds to a door on the inner court; there, I have already a steed in waiting. Deign, for precaution, to use my hat and manteline."

The king hastily adopted the suggestion, followed the noiseless steps of Ratcliffe, gained the door, sprang upon his steed, and dashing right through a crowd assembled by the gate, galloped alone and fast, untracked by human enemy, but goaded by the foe that

* Afterwards Lord Fitzwalter. See "Lingard," note, vol. iii., p. 507, quarto edition, for the proper date to be assigned to this royal visit to the More;—a date we have here adopted—not as Sharon Turner and others place,—viz. (upon the authority of Hearne's Fragm., 302, which subsequent events disprove) *after* the open rebellion of Warwick, but just *before* it—that is, not after Easter, but before Lent.

mounts the rider's steed—over field, over fell, over dyke, through hedge, and in the dead of night reined in at last before the royal towers of Windsor.

CHAPTER II

MANY THINGS BRIEFLY TOLD

The events that followed the king's escape were rapid and startling. The barons assembled at the More, enraged at Edward's seeming distrust of them, separated in loud anger. The archbishop learned the cause from one of his servitors, who detected Marmaduke's ambush, but he was too wary to make known a circumstance suspicious to himself. He flew to London, and engaged the mediation of the Duchess of York to assist his own.*

The earl received their joint overtures with stern and ominous coldness, and abruptly repaired to Warwick, taking with him the Lady Anne. There he was joined, the same day, by the Duke and Duchess of Clarence.

The Lincolnshire rebellion gained head: Edward made a dexterous feint in calling, by public commission, upon Clarence and Warwick to aid in dispersing it; if they refused, the odium of first aggression would seemingly rest with them. Clarence, more induced by personal ambition than sympathy with Warwick's wrong, incensed by his brother's recent slights, looking to Edward's resignation and his own consequent accession to the throne, and inflamed by the ambition and pride of a wife whom he at once feared and idolised, went hand in heart with the earl; but not one

* Lingard. See for the dates, Fabyan, 657.

lord and captain whom Montagu had sounded lent favour to the deposition of one brother for the advancement of the next. Clarence, though popular, was too young to be respected: many there were who would rather have supported the earl, if an aspirant to the throne; but that choice forbidden by the earl himself, there could be but two parties in England—the one for Edward IV., the other for Henry VI.

Lord Montagu had repaired to Warwick Castle to communicate in person this result of his diplomacy. The earl, whose manner was completely changed, no longer frank and hearty, but close and sinister, listened in gloomy silence.

"And now," said Montagu, with the generous emotion of a man whose nobler nature was stirred deeply, "if you resolve on war with Edward, I am willing to renounce my own ambition, the hand of a king's daughter for my son—so that I may avenge the honour of our common name. I confess that I have so loved Edward that I would fain pray you to pause, did I not distrust myself, lest in such delay his craft should charm me back to the old affection. Nathless, to your arm, and your great soul, I have owed all, and if you are resolved to strike the blow, I am ready to share the hazard."

The earl turned away his face, and wrung his brother's hand.

"Our father, methinks, hears thee from the grave!" said he, solemnly, and there was a long pause. At length Warwick resumed: "Return to London: seem to take no share in my actions, whatever they be; if I fail, why drag thee into my ruin?—and yet, trust me, I am rash and fierce no more. He who sets his heart on a great object suddenly becomes wise. When a

throne is in the dust—when from St. Paul's Cross a voice goes forth, to Carlisle and the Land's End, proclaiming that the reign of Edward the Fourth is past and gone—then, Montagu, I claim thy promise of aid and fellowship—not before!"

Meanwhile, the king, eager to dispel thought in action, rushed in person against the rebellious forces. Stung by fear into cruelty, he beheaded, against all kingly faith, his hostages, Lord Welles and Sir Thomas Dymoke, summoned Sir Robert Welles, the leader of the revolt, to surrender; received for answer, "that Sir Robert Welles would not trust the perfidy of the man who had murdered his father!"—pushed on to Erpingham, defeated the rebels in a signal battle, and crowned his victory by a series of ruthless cruelties—committed to the fierce and learned Earl of Worcester, "Butcher of England."* With the prompt vigour and superb

* Stowe. Warkworth Chronicle—Cont. Croyl. Lord Worcester ordered Clapham (a squire to Lord Warwick), and nineteen others, gentlemen and yeomen, *to be impaled*, and from the horror the spectacle inspired, and the universal odium it attached to Worcester, it is to be feared that the unhappy men were still sensible to the agony of this infliction, though they appear first to have been drawn, and partially hanged;—outrage confined only to the *dead bodies* of rebels being too common at that day to have excited the indignation which attended the sentence Worcester passed on his victims. It is in vain that some writers would seek to cleanse the memory of this learned nobleman from the stain of cruelty, by rhetorical remarks on the improbability that a cultivator of letters should be of a ruthless disposition. The general philosophy of this defence is erroneous. In ignorant ages a man of superior acquirements is not necessarily made humane by the cultivation of his intellect; on the contrary, he too often learns to look upon the uneducated herd as things of another clay. Of this truth all history is pregnant—witness the accomplished tyrants of Greece, the profound and cruel intellect of the Italian Borgias. Richard III. and Henry VIII. were both highly educated for their age. But in the case of Tiptoft, Lord Worcester, the evidence of his cruelty is no less incontestable than that which proves his learning—the Croyland

generalship which Edward ever displayed in war, he then cut his gory way to the force which Clarence and Warwick (though their hostility was still undeclared) had levied, with the intent to join the defeated rebels. He sent his herald, Garter King-at-arms, to summon the earl and the duke to appear before him within a certain day. The time expired; he proclaimed them traitors, and offered rewards for their apprehension! *

So sudden had been Warwick's defection—so rapid the king's movements—that the earl had not time to mature his resources, assemble his vassals, consolidate his schemes. His very preparations, upon the night on which Edward had repaid his services by such hideous ingratitude, had manned the country with armies against himself. Girt but with a scanty force collected in haste (and which consisted merely of his retainers, in the single shire of Warwick), the march of Edward cut him off from the counties in which his name was held most dear—in which his trumpet could raise up hosts. He was disappointed in the aid he had expected from his powerful but self-interested brother-in-law, Lord Stanley. Revenge had become more dear to him than life: life must not be hazarded, lest revenge be lost. On still marched the king; and the day that his troops entered Exeter, Warwick, the females of his family, with Clarence, and a small but armed retinue, took ship from Dartmouth, sailed for Calais (before which town, while at anchor, Isabel was confined of

historian alone is unimpeachable. Worcester's popular name of "the Butcher" is sufficient testimony in itself. The people are often mistaken, to be sure, but can scarcely be so upon the one point—whether a man who has sat in judgment on themselves be merciful or cruel.'

* One thousand pounds in money, or one hundred pounds a year in land; an immense reward for that day.

her first-born)—to the earl's rage and dismay his deputy Vauclerc fired upon his ships. Warwick then steered on towards Normandy, captured some Flemish vessels by the way, in token of defiance to the earl's old Burgundian foe—and landed at Harfleur, where he and his companions were received with royal honours by the Admiral of France, and finally took their way to the court of Louis XI., at Amboise.

"The danger is past for ever!" said King Edward, as the wine sparkled in his goblet. "Rebellion hath lost its head—and now, indeed, and for the first time, a monarch I reign alone!" *

* Before leaving England, Warwick and Clarence are generally said to have fallen in with Anthony Woodville and Lord Audley, and ordered them to execution; from which they were saved by a Dorsetshire gentleman. Carte, who, though his history is not without great mistakes, is well worth reading by those whom the character of Lord Warwick may interest, says, that the earl had "too much magnanimity to put them to death immediately, according to the common practice of the times, and only imprisoned them in the castle of Wardour, from whence they were soon rescued by John Thornhill, a gentleman of Dorsetshire." The whole of this story is, however, absolutely contradicted by the "Warkworth Chronicle" (p. 9, edited by Mr. Halliwell), according to which authority Anthony Woodville was at that time commanding a fleet upon the Channel, which waylaid Warwick on his voyage, but the success therein attributed to the gallant Anthony, in dispersing or seizing all the earl's ships, save the one that bore the earl himself and his family, is proved to be purely fabulous by the earl's well-attested capture of the Flemish vessels, as he passed from Calais to the coasts of Normandy, an exploit he could never have performed with a single vessel of his own. It is very probable that the story of Anthony Woodville's capture and peril at this time originates in a misadventure many years before, and recorded in the Paston letters, as well as in the Chronicles.—In the year 1459, Anthony Woodville and his father, Lord Rivers (then zealous Lancastrians), really did fall into the hands of the Earl of March (Edward IV.), Warwick and Salisbury, and got off with a sound "rating" upon the rude language which such "knaves' sons," and "little squires" had held to those "who were of king's blood."

CHAPTER III

THE PLOT OF THE HOSTELRY—THE MAID AND THE SCHOLAR IN THEIR HOME

The country was still disturbed, and the adherents, whether of Henry or the earl, still rose in many an outbreak, though prevented from swelling into one common army by the extraordinary vigour not only of Edward, but of Gloucester and Hastings,—when one morning, just after the events thus rapidly related, the hostelry of Master Sancroft, in the suburban parish of Marybone, rejoiced in a motley crowd of customers and topers.

Some half-score soldiers, returned in triumph from the royal camp, sat round a table placed agreeably enough in the deep recess made by the large jutting lattice; with them were mingled about as many women, strangely and gaudily clad. These last were all young; one or two, indeed, little advanced from childhood. But there was no expression of youth in their hard, sinister features: coarse paint supplied the place of bloom; the very youngest had a wrinkle on her brow; their forms wanted the round and supple grace of early years. Living principally in the open air, trained from infancy to feats of activity, their muscles were sharp and prominent—their aspects had something of masculine audacity and rudeness; health itself seemed in them more loathsome than disease. Upon those faces of bronze, vice had set its ineffable, unmistaken seal. To those eyes never had sprung the tears of compassion or woman's gentle sorrow; on those brows never had flushed the glow of modest shame: their very voices

half belied their sex—harsh, and deep, and hoarse—their laughter loud and dissonant. Some amongst them were not destitute of a certain beauty, but it was a beauty of feature with a common hideousness of expression—an expression at once cunning, bold, callous, and licentious. Womanless, through the worst vices of woman—passionless, through the premature waste of passion—they stood between the sexes like foul and monstrous anomalies, made up and fashioned from the rank depravities of both. These creatures seemed to have newly arrived from some long wayfaring—their shoes and the hems of their robes were covered with dust and mire—their faces were heated, and the veins in their bare, sinewy, sun-burnt arms were swollen by fatigue. Each had beside her on the floor a timbrel—each wore at her girdle a long knife in its sheath: well that the sheaths hid the blades, for not one—not even that which yon cold-eyed child of fifteen wore—but had on its steel the dark stain of human blood!

The presence of soldiers fresh from the scene of action had naturally brought into the hostelry several of the idle gossips of the suburb, and these stood round the table, drinking into their large ears the boasting narratives of the soldiers. At a small table, apart from the revellers, but evidently listening with attention to all the news of the hour, sat a friar, gravely discussing a mighty tankard of huffcap, and ever and anon, as he lifted his head for the purpose of drinking, glancing a wanton eye at one of the tymbesteres.

"But an' you had seen," said a trooper, who was the mouthpiece of his comrades—"an' you had seen the raptrils run when King Edward himself led the charge! Marry, it was like a cat in a rabbit burrow! Easy to see, I trow, that Earl Warwick was not amongst them! *His* men, at least, fight like devils!"

"But there was one tall fellow," said a soldier, setting down his tankard, "who made a good fight and dour, and, but for me and my comrades, would have cut his way to the king."

"Ay—ay—true; we saved his highness, and ought to have been knighted—but there's no gratitude now-a-days!"

"And who was this doughty warrior?" asked one of the bystanders, who secretly favoured the rebellion.

"Why, it was said that he was Robin of Redesdale. He who fought my Lord Montagu off York."

"Our Robin!" exclaimed several voices. "Ay, he was ever a brave fellow—poor Robin!"

"'Your Robin,' and 'poor Robin,' varlets!" cried the principal trooper. "Have a care! What do ye mean by your Robin?"

"Marry, sir soldier," quoth a butcher, scratching his head, and in a humble voice—"craving your pardon, and the king's, this Master Robin sojourned a short time in this hamlet, and was a kind neighbour, and mighty glib of the tongue. Don't ye mind, neighbours," he added, rapidly, eager to change the conversation, "how he made us leave off when we were just about burning Adam Warner, the old nigromancer, in his den yonder? Who else could have done that? But an' we had known Robin had been a rebel to sweet King Edward, we'd have roasted him along with the wizard!"

One of the timbrel-girls, the leader of the choir, her arm round a soldier's neck, looked up at the last speech, and her eye followed the gesture of the butcher, as he pointed through the open lattice to the sombre, ruinous abode of Adam Warner.

"Was that the house ye would have burned?" she asked, abruptly.

"Yes; but Robin told us the king would hang those who took on them the king's blessed privilege of burning nigromancers; and, sure enough, old Adam Warner was advanced to be wizard-in-chief to the king's own highness a week or two afterwards."

The friar had made a slight movement at the name of Warner; he now pushed his stool nearer to the principal group, and drew his hood completely over his countenance.

"Yea!" exclaimed the mechanic, whose son had been the innocent cause of the memorable siege to poor Adam's dilapidated fortress, related in the first book of this narrative—"yea; and what did he when there? Did he not devise a horrible engine for the destruction of the poor—an engine that was to do all the work in England by the devil's help?—so that if a gentleman wanted a coat of mail, or a cloth tunic—if his dame needed a Norwich worsted—if a yeoman lacked a plough or a wagon, or his good wife a pot or a kettle, they were to go, not to the armourer, and the draper, and the tailor, and the weaver, and the wheelwright, and the blacksmith,—but, hey presto! Master Warner sets his imps a-churning, and turned ye out mail and tunic, worsted and wagon, kettle and pot, spick and span new, from his brewage of vapour and sea-coal? Oh, have I not heard enough of the sorcerer from my brother, who works in the Chepe for Master Stockton, the mercer!—and Master Stockton was one of the worshipful deputies to whom the old nigromancer had the front to boast his devices."

"It is true," said the friar, suddenly.

"Yes, reverend father, it is true," said the mechanic, doffing his cap, and inclining his swarthy face to this unexpected witness of his veracity. A murmur of

wrath and hatred was heard amongst the bystanders. The soldiers indifferently turned to their female companions. There was a brief silence; and, involuntarily, the gossips stretched over the table to catch sight of the house of so demoniac an oppressor of the poor.

"See," said the baker, "the smoke still curls from the roof-top! I heard he had come back. Old Madge, his handmaid, has bought cimnel-cakes of me the last week or so; nothing less than the finest wheat serves him now, I trow. However, right's right and——"

"Come back!" cried the fierce mechanic, "the owl hath kept close in his roost! An' it were not for the king's favour, I would soon see how the wizard liked to have fire and water brought to bear against himself!"

"Sit down, sweetheart," whispered one of the young tymbesteres to the last speaker—

> "Come kiss me, my darling,
> Warm kisses I trade for——"

"Avaunt!" quoth the mechanic, gruffly, and shaking off the seductive arm of the tymbestere—"Avaunt! I have neither liefe nor halfpence for thee and thine. Out on thee—a child of thy years, a rope's end to thy back were a friend's best kindness!"

The girl's eyes sparkled, she instinctively put her hand to her knife; then turning to a soldier by her side, she said—"Hear you that, and sit still?"

"Thunder and wounds!" growled the soldier thus appealed to—"more respect to the sex, knave; if I don't break thy fool's costard with my sword-hilt, it is only because Red Grisell can take care of herself against twenty such lozels as thou. These honest girls have been to the wars with us; King Edward grudges no

man his jolly fere. Speak up for thyself, Grisell! How many tall fellows didst thou put out of their pain, after the battle of Losecote?"

"Only five, Hal," replied the cold-eyed girl, and showing her glittering teeth with the grin of a young tigress;—"but one was a captain. I shall do better next time; it was my first battle, thou knowest!"

The more timid of the bystanders exchanged a glance of horror, and drew back. The mechanic resumed, sullenly—

"I seek no quarrel with lass or lover. I am a plain, blunt man, with a wife and children, who are dear to me; and if I have a grudge to the nigromancer, it is because he glamoured my poor boy Tim. See!"—and he caught up a blue-eyed, handsome boy, who had been clinging to his side, and baring the child's arm, showed it to the spectators; there was a large scar on the limb, and it was shrunk and withered.

"It was my own fault," said the little fellow, deprecatingly.

The affectionate father silenced the sufferer with a cuff on the cheek, and resumed—"Ye note, neighbours, the day when the foul wizard took this little one in his arms: well, three weeks afterwards—that very day three weeks—as he was standing like a lamb by the fire, the good wife's cauldron seethed over, without reason or rhyme, and scalded his arm till it rivelled up like a leaf in November; and if that is not glamour, why have we laws against witchcraft?"

"True—true!" groaned the chorus.

The boy, who had borne his father's blow without a murmur, now again attempted remonstrance. "The hot water went over the grey cat, too, but Master Warner never bewitched *her*, daddy."

"He takes his part!—You hear the daff laddy? He takes the old nigromancer's part—a sure sign of the witchcraft; but I'll leather it out of thee, I will!" and the mechanic again raised his weighty arm. The child did not this time await the blow; he dodged under the butcher's apron, gained the door, and disappeared. "And he teaches our own children to fly in our faces!" said the father, in a kind of whimper.

The neighbours sighed, in commiseration.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, in a fiercer tone, grinding his teeth, and shaking his clenched fist towards Adam Warner's melancholy house—"I say again, if the king did not protect the vile sorcerer, I would free the land from his devilries, ere his black master could come to his help."

"The king cares not a straw for Master Warner or his inventions, my son," said a rough, loud voice. All turned, and saw the friar standing in the midst of the circle. "Know ye not, my children, that the king sent the wretch neck and crop out of the palace, for having bewitched the Earl of Warwick and his grace the Lord Clarence, so that they turned unnaturally against their own kinsman, his highness. But 'Manus malorum suos bonos breaket,'—that is to say—the fists of wicked men only whack their own bones. Ye have all heard tell of Friar Bungey, my children?"

"Ay—ay!" answered two or three in a breath—"a wizard, it's true, and a mighty one; but he never did harm to the poor, though they do say he made a quaint image of the earl, and——"

"Tut—tut!" interrupted the friar, "all Bungey did was to try to disenchant the Lord Warwick, whom yon miscreant had spellbound. Poor Bungey! he is a friend to the people: and when he found that Master

Adam was making a device for their ruin, he spared no toil, I assure ye, to frustrate the iniquity. Oh, how he fasted and watched! Oh, how many a time he fought, tooth and nail, with the devil in person, to get at the infernal invention! for if *he* had that invention once in his hands, he could turn it to good account, I can promise ye: and give ye rain for the green blade, and sun for the ripe sheaf. But the fiend got the better at first; and King Edward, bewitched himself for the moment, would have hanged Friar Bungey for crossing old Adam, if he had not called three times, in a loud voice—'Presto pepranxenon!' changed himself into a bird, and flown out of the window. As soon as Master Adam Warner found the field clear to himself, he employed his daughter to bewitch the Lord Hastings; he set brother against brother, and made the king and Lord George fall to loggerheads; he stirred up the rebellion, and where he would have stopped the foul fiend only knows, if your friend Friar Bungey, who, though a wizard as you say, is only so for your benefit (and a holy priest into the bargain), had not, by aid of a good spirit, whom he conjured up in the Island of Tartary, disenchanted the king, and made him see in a dream what the villanous Warner was devising against his crown and his people,—whereon his highness sent Master Warner and his daughter back to their roost, and, helped by Friar Bungey, beat his enemies out of the kingdom. So, if ye have a mind, to save your children from mischief and malice, ye may set to work with good heart, always provided that ye touch not old Adam's iron invention. Woe betide ye, if ye think to destroy *that!* Bring it safe to Friar Bungey, whom ye will find returned to the palace, and journeymen's wages will be a penny a day

higher for the next ten years to come!" With these words the friar threw down his reckoning, and moved majestically to the door.

"An' I might trust you?" said Tim's father, laying hold of the friar's serge.

"Ye may—ye may!" cried the leader of the tymbesteres starting up from the lap of her soldier, "for it is Friar Bungey himself!"

A movement of astonishment and terror was universal.

"Friar Bungey himself!" repeated the burly impostor. "Right, lassie, right; and he now goes to the palace of the Tower, to mutter good spells in King Edward's ear—spells to defeat the malignant ones, and to lower the price of beer. Wax wobiscum!"

With that salutation, more benevolent than accurate, the friar vanished from the room; the chief of the tymbesteres leaped lightly on the table, put one foot on the soldier's shoulder, and sprang through the open lattice. She found the friar in the act of mounting a sturdy mule, which had been tied to a post by the door.

"Fie, Graul Skellet! Fie, Graul!" said the conjuror. "Respect for my serge. We must not be noted together out of door in the daylight. There's a groat for thee. Vade, execrabilis,—that is, Good day to thee, pretty rogue!"

"A word, friar, a word. Wouldst thou have the old man burned, drowned, or torn piecemeal! He hath a daughter, too, who once sought to mar our trade with her gittern; a daughter, then in a kirtle that I would not have nimmed from a hedge, but whom I last saw in sarcenet and lawn, with a great lord for her fere." The tymbestere's eyes shone with malignant envy, as she added—"Graul Skellet loves not to see

those who have worn worsted and say, walk in sarcenet and lawn! Graul Skellet loves not wenches who have lords for their feres, and yet who shrink from Graul and her sisters as the sound from the leper."

"Fegs," answered the friar, impatiently, "I know naught against the daughter—a pretty lass, but too high for my kisses. And as for the father, I want not the man's life—that is, not very specially—but his model, his mechanical. He may go free, if that can be compassed; if not,—why, the model at all risks! Serve me in this."

"And thou wilt teach me the last tricks of the cards, and thy great art of making phantoms glide by on the wall?"

"Bring the model intact, and I will teach thee more, Graul;—the dead man's candle, and the charm of the newt—and I'll give thee, to boot, the caul of the parricide, that thou hast prayed me so oft for. Hum!—thou hast a girl in thy troop who hath a blinking eye that well pleases me;—but go now, and obey me. Work before play—and grace before pudding!"

The tymbestere nodded, snapped her fingers in the air, and humming no holy ditty, returned to the house through the doorway.

This short conference betrays to the reader the relations, mutually advantageous, which subsisted between the conjuror and the tymbesteres. Their troop (the mothers, perchance, of the generation we treat of) had been familiar to the friar in his old capacity of mountebank or tregetour, and in his clerical and courtly elevation, he did not disdain an ancient connection that served him well with the populace; for these grim children of vice seemed present in every place, where pastime was gay, or strife was rampant; in peace, at

the merry-makings and the hostelries—in war, following the camp, and seen, at night, prowling through the battle-fields to dispatch the wounded and to rifle the slain:—In merry-making, hostelry, or in camp, they could thus still spread the fame of Friar Bungey, and uphold his repute both for terrible lore and for hearty love of the commons.

Nor was this all; both tymbesteres and conjuror were fortune-tellers by profession. They could interchange the anecdotes each picked up in their different lines. The tymbestere could thus learn the secrets of gentle and courtier—the conjuror those of the artisan and mechanic.

Unconscious of the formidable dispositions of their neighbours, Sibyll and Warner were inhaling the sweet air of the early spring in their little garden. His disgrace had affected the philosopher less than might be supposed. True, that the loss of the king's favour was the deferring indefinitely—perhaps for life—any practical application of his adored theory; and yet, somehow or other, the theory itself consoled him. At the worst, he should find some disciple, some ingenious student, more fortunate than himself, to whom he could bequeath the secret, and who, when Adam was in his grave, would teach the world to revere his name. Meanwhile, his time was his own; he was lord of a home, though ruined and desolate; he was free, with his free thoughts; and therefore, as he paced the narrow garden, his step was lighter, his mind less absent, than when parched with feverish fear and hope, for the immediate practical success of a principle which was to be tried before the hazardous tribunal of prejudice and ignorance.

"My child," said the sage, "I feel, for the first time

for years, the distinction of the seasons. I feel that we are walking in the pleasant spring. Young days come back to me like dreams; and I could almost think thy mother were once more by my side!"

Sibyll pressed her father's hand, and a soft but melancholy sigh stirred her rosy lips. She, too, felt the balm of the young year; yet her father's words broke upon sad and anxious musings. Not to youth as to age, not to loving fancy as to baffled wisdom, has seclusion charms that compensate for the passionate and active world! On coming back to the old house, on glancing round its mildewed walls, comfortless and bare, the neglected, weed-grown garden, Sibyll had shuddered in dismay. Had her ambition fallen again into its old abject state? Were all her hopes to restore her ancestral fortunes, to vindicate her dear father's fame, shrunk into this slough of actual poverty—the butterfly's wings folded back into the chrysalis shroud of torpor? The vast disparity between herself and Hastings had not struck her so forcibly at the court; here, at home, the very walls proclaimed it. When Edward had dismissed the unwelcome witnesses of his attempted crime, he had given orders that they should be conducted to their house through the most private ways. He naturally desired to create no curious comment upon their departure. Unperceived by their neighbours, Sibyll and her father had gained access by the garden gate. Old Madge received them in dismay; for she had been in the habit of visiting Sibyll weekly at the palace, and had gained, in the old familiarity subsisting, then, between maiden and nurse, some insight into her heart. She had cherished the fondest hopes for the fate of her young mistress;—and now, to labour and to penury had the fate re-

turned! The guard who accompanied them, according to Edward's orders, left some pieces of gold, which Adam rejected, but Madge secretly received and judiciously expended. And this was all their wealth. But not of toil nor of penury in themselves thought Sibyll; she thought but of Hastings—wildly, passionately, trustfully, unceasingly, of the absent Hastings. Oh! he would seek her—he would come—her reverse would but the more endear her to him! Hastings came not. She soon learned the wherefore. War threatened the land—he was at his post, at the head of armies.

Oh, with what panoply of prayer she sought to shield that beloved breast! And now the old man spoke of the blessed spring, the holiday time of lovers and of love, and the young girl, sighing, said to her mournful heart, "The world hath its sun—where is mine?"

The peacock strutted up to his poor protectors, and spread his plumes to the gilding beams. And then Sibyll recalled the day when she had walked in that spot with Marmaduke, and he had talked of his youth, ambition, and lusty hopes, while, silent and absorbed, she had thought within herself, "could the world be open to me as to him,—I too have ambition, and it should find its goal." Now what contrast between the two—the man enriched and honoured, if to-day in peril or in exile, to-morrow free to march forward still on his career—the world the country to him whose heart was bold and whose name was stainless! And she, the woman, brought back to the prison-home, scorn around her, impotent to avenge, and forbidden to fly! Wherefore?—Sibyll felt her superiority of mind, of thought, of nature—Wherefore the contrast?

The success was that of man, the discomfiture that of woman. Woe to the man who precedes his age, but never yet has an age been in which genius and ambition are safe to woman!

The father and the child turned into their house; the day was declining; Adam mounted to his studious chamber. Sibyll sought the solitary servant.

"What tidings, oh, what tidings! The war, you say, is over; the great earl, his sweet daughter, safe upon the seas, but Hastings, oh Hastings! what of him?"

"My bonnibell, my lady-bird, I have none but good tales to tell thee. I saw and spoke with a soldier who served under Lord Hastings himself; he is unscathed, he is in London. But they say that one of his bands is quartered in the suburb, and that there is a report of a rising in Hertfordshire."

"When will peace come to England and to me!" sighed Sibyll.

CHAPTER IV

THIS WORLD'S JUSTICE, AND THE WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS

The night had now commenced, and Sibyll was still listening,—or, perhaps, listening not—to the soothing babble of the venerable servant. They were both seated in the little room that adjoined the hall, and their only light came through the door opening on the garden—a grey, indistinct twilight, relieved by the few earliest stars. The peacock, his head under his wing, roosted on the balustrade, and the song of the nightingale, from amidst one of the neighbouring copses,

which studded the ground towards the chase of Marybone, came soft and distant on the serene air. The balm and freshness of spring were felt in the dews, in the skies, in the sweet breath of young herb and leaf; —through the calm of ever-watchful nature, it seemed as if you might mark, distinct and visible, minute after minute, the blessed growth of April into May.

Suddenly, Madge uttered a cry of alarm, and pointed towards the opposite wall. Sibyll, startled from her reverie, looked up, and saw something dusk and dwarf-life perched upon the crumbling eminence. Presently this apparition leaped lightly into the garden, and the alarm of the women was lessened on seeing a young boy creep stealthily over the grass, and approach the open door.

"Hey, child!" said Madge, rising. "What wantest thou?"

"Hist, gammer, hist! Ah! the young mistress? That's well. Hist! I say again." The boy entered the room. "I'm in time to save you. In half an hour your house will be broken into, perhaps burnt. The boys are clapping their hands now at the thoughts of the bonfire. Father and all the neighbours are getting ready. Hark! hark! No, it is only the wind! The tymbesteres are to give note. When you hear their bells tinkle, the mob will meet. Run for your lives, you and the old man, and don't ever say it was poor Tim who told you this, for father would beat me to death. Ye can still get through the garden into the fields. Quick!"

"I will go to the master," exclaimed Madge, hurrying from the room.

The child caught Sibyll's cold hand through the dark. "And I say, mistress, if his worship *is* a wiz-

ard, don't let him punish father and mother, or poor Tim, or his little sister; though Tim was once naughty, and hooted Master Warner. Many, many, many a time and oft have I seen that kind, mild face in my sleep, just as when it bent over me,—while I kicked and screamed—and the poor gentleman said, 'Thinkest thou I would harm thee?' But he'll forgive me now, will he not? And when I turned the seething water over myself, and they said it was all along of the wizard, my heart pained more than the arm. But they whip me, and groan out that the devil is in me, if I don't say that the kettle upset of itself! Oh, those tymbesteres! Mistress, did you ever see them? They fright me. If you could hear how they set on all the neighbours! And their laugh—it makes the hair stand on end! But you will get away, and thank Tim too? Oh, I shall laugh then, when they find the old house empty!"

"May our dear Lord bless thee—bless thee, child," sobbed Sibyll, clasping the boy in her arms, and kissing him, while her tears bathed his cheeks.

A light gleamed on the threshold—Madge, holding a candle, appeared with Warner, his hat and cloak thrown on in haste. "What is this?" said the poor scholar. "Can it be true? Is mankind so cruel? What have I done, woe is me! what have I done to deserve this?"

"Come, dear father, quick," said Sibyll, drying her tears, and wakened, by the presence of the old man, into energy and courage. "But put thy hand on this boy's head, and bless him; for it is he who has, haply, saved us."

The boy trembled a moment as the long-bearded face turned towards him, but when he caught and recog-

nised those meek, sweet eyes, his superstition vanished, and it was but a holy and grateful awe that thrilled his young blood, as the old man placed both withered hands over his yellow hair, and murmured—

"God shield thy youth—God make thy manhood worthy—God give thee children in thine old age with hearts like thine!"

Scarcely had the prayer ceased when the clash of timbrels, with their jingling bells, was heard in the street. Once, twice, again, and a fierce yell closed in chorus—caught up and echoed from corner to corner, from house to house.

"Run—run!" cried the boy, turning white with terror.

"But the Eureka—my hope—my mind's child!" exclaimed Adam, suddenly, and halting at the door.

"Eh—eh!" said Madge, pushing him forward. "It is too heavy to move; thou couldst not lift it. Think of thine own flesh and blood—of thy daughter—of her dead mother. Save her life, if thou carest not for thine own!"

"Go, Sibyll, go—and thou, Madge—I will stay. What matters my life, it is but the servant of a thought! Perish master—perish slave!"

"Father, unless you come with me, I stir not. Fly or perish. Your fate is mine! Another minute! Oh, heaven of mercy, that roar again! We are both lost!"

"Go, sir, go; they care not for your iron—iron cannot feel. They will not touch *that!* Have not your daughter's life upon your soul!"

"Sibyll—Sibyll, forgive me! Come!" said Warner, conscience-stricken at the appeal.

Madge and the boy ran forwards—the old woman unbarred the garden-gate—Sibyll and her father went

forth—the fields stretched before them calm and solitary—the boy leaped up, kissed Sibyll's pale cheek, and then bounded across the grass, and vanished.

"Loiter not, Madge. Come!" cried Sibyll.

"Nay," said the old woman, shrinking back; "they bear no grudge to me; I am too old to do aught but burthen ye. I will stay, and perchance save the house and the chattels, and poor master's deft contrivance. Whist! thou knowest his heart would break if none were by to guard it."

With that the faithful servant thrust the broad pieces that yet remained of the king's gift into the gipsire Sibyll wore at her girdle, and then closed and rebarred the door before they could detain her.

"It is base to leave her," said the scholar-gentleman.

The noble Sibyll could not refute her father. Afar they heard the trampling of feet: suddenly, a dark red light shot up into the blue air, a light from the flame of many torches.

"The wizard—the wizard! Death to the wizard, who would starve the poor!" yelled forth, and was echoed by a stern hurrah.

Adam stood motionless, Sibyll by his side.

"The wizard and *his daughter!*" shrieked a sharp single voice, the voice of Graul the tymbestere.

Adam turned. "Fly, my child—they now threaten *thee*. Come—come—come;" and, taking her by the hand, he hurried her across the fields, skirting the hedge, their shadows dodging, irregular, and quaint, on the starlit sward. The father had lost all thought —all care but for the daughter's life. They paused at last, out of breath and exhausted: the sounds at the distance were lulled and hushed. They looked

towards the direction of the home they had abandoned, expecting to see the flames destined to consume it reddening the sky; but all was dark—or, rather, no light save the holy stars and the rising moon offended the majestic heaven.

"They cannot harm the poor old woman; she hath no lore. On her grey hairs has fallen not the curse of man's hate!" said Warner.

"Right, father; when they found us flown, doubtless the cruel ones dispersed. But they may search yet for thee. Lean on me, I am strong and young. Another effort, and we gain the safe coverts of the Chase."

While yet the last word hung on her lips, they saw, on the path they had left, the burst of torch-light, and heard the mob hounding on their track. But the thick copses, with their pale green just budding into life, were at hand. On they fled: the deer started from amidst the entangled fern, but stood and gazed at them without fear; the playful hares in the green alleys ceased not their nightly sports at the harmless footsteps; and when at last, in the dense thicket, they sank down on the mossy roots of a giant oak, the nightingales overhead chanted as if in melancholy welcome. They were saved!

But in their home, fierce fires glared amidst the tossing torch-light; the crowd, baffled by the strength of the door, scaled the wall, broke through the lattice-work of the hall window, and streaming through room after room, roared forth—"Death to the wizard!" Amidst the sordid dresses of the men, the soiled and faded tinsel of the tymbesteres gleamed and sparkled. It was a scene the she-fiends revelled in—dear are outrage and malice, and the excitement of turbulent pas-

sions, and the savage voices of frantic men, and the thirst of blood to those everlasting furies of a mob —under whatever name we know them, in whatever time they taint with their presence—women in whom womanhood is blasted!

Door after door was burst open with cries of disappointed rage; at last they ascended the turret-stairs —they found a small door barred and locked. Tim's father, a huge axe in his brawny arm, shivered the panels; the crowd rushed in—and there, seated amongst a strange and motley litter, they found the devoted Madge. The poor old woman had collected into this place, as the stronghold of the mansion, whatever portable articles seemed to her most precious, either from value or association. Sibyll's gittern (Marmaduke's gift) lay amidst a lumber of tools and implements—a faded robe of her dead mother's, treasured by Madge and Sibyll both, as a relic of holy love —a few platters and cups of pewter, the pride of old Madge's heart to keep bright and clean, odds and ends of old hangings, a battered silver brooch (a love-gift to Madge herself when she was young)—these, and suchlike scraps of finery, hoards inestimable to the household memory and affection, lay confusedly heaped around the huge grim model, before which, mute and tranquil, sat the brave old woman.

The crowd halted, and stared round in superstitious terror, and dumb marvel.

The leader of the tymbesteres sprang forward.

"Where is thy master, old hag, and where the bonny maid who glamours lords, and despises us bold lasses?"

"Alack! master and the damsel have gone hours ago! I am alone in the house; what's your will?"

"The crone looks parlous witchlike!" said Tim's father, crossing himself, and somewhat retreating from her grey, unquiet eyes. And, indeed, poor Madge, with her wrinkled face, bony form, and high cap, corresponded far more with the vulgar notions of a dabbler in the black art than did Adam Warner, with his comely countenance and noble mien.

"So she doth, indeed, and verily," said a hump-backed tinker, "if we were to try a dip in the horse-pool yonder it could do no harm."

"Away with her, away!" cried several voices at that humane suggestion.

"Nay, nay," quoth the baker, "she is a douce creature, after all, and hath dealt with me many years. I don't care what becomes of the wizard—every one knows [he added with pride] that I was one of the first to set fire to his house when Robin gainsayed it! —but right's right—burn the master, not the drudge!"

This intercession might have prevailed, but unhappily, at that moment Graul Skellet, who had secured two stout fellows to accomplish the object so desired by Friar Bungey, laid hands on the model, and, at her shrill command, the men advanced and dislodged it from its place. At the same time, the other tymbesteres, caught by the sight of things pleasing to their wonted tastes, threw themselves, one upon the faded robe Sibyll's mother had worn in her chaste and happy youth; another, upon poor Madge's silver brooch; a third, upon the gittern.

These various attacks roused up all the spirit and wrath of the old woman: her cries of distress, as she darted from one to the other, striking to the right and left with her feeble arms, her form trembling with passion, were at once ludicrous and piteous, and these

were responded to by the shrill exclamations of the fierce tymbesteres, as they retorted scratch for scratch, and blow for blow. The spectators grew animated by the sight of actual outrage and resistance; the hump-backed tinker, whose unwholesome fancy one of the aggrieved tymbesteres had mightily warmed, hastened to the relief of his virago, and rendered furious by finding ten nails fastened suddenly on his face, he struck down the poor creature by a blow that stunned her, seized her in his arms—for deformed and weakly as the tinker was, the old woman, now sense and spirit were gone, was as light as skin and bone could be—and followed by half a score of his comrades, whooping and laughing, bore her down the stairs. Tim's father, who, whether from parental affection, or, as is more probable, from the jealous hatred and prejudice of ignorant industry, was bent upon Adam's destruction, halloed on some of his fiercer fellows into the garden, tracked the footsteps of the fugitives by the trampled grass, and bounded over the wall in fruitless chase. But on went the more giddy of the mob, rather in sport than in cruelty, with a chorus of drunken apprentices and riotous boys, to the spot where the hump-backed tinker had dragged his passive burthen. The foul green pond near Master Sancroft's hostel reflected the glare of torches; six of the tymbesteres, leaping and wheeling, with doggerel song and discordant music, gave the signal for the ordeal of the witch—

"Lake or river, dyke or ditch,
Water never drowns the witch.
Witch or wizard would ye know?—
Sink or swim, is ay or no.
Lift her, swing her, once and twice,
Lift her, swing her o'er the brim,—
Lille—lera—twice and thrice—
Ha! ha! mother, sink or swim!"

And while the last line was chanted, amidst the full jollity of laughter and clamour, and clattering timbrels, there was a splash in the sullen water; the green slough on the surface parted with an oozing gurgle, and then came a dead silence.

"A murrain on the hag!—she does not even struggle!" said, at last, the hump-backed tinker.

"No, no! she cares not for water—try fire! Out with her! out!" cried Red Grisell.

"Aroint her! she is sullen!" said the tinker, as his lean fingers clutched up the dead body, and let it fall upon the margin.

"Dead!" said the baker, shuddering; "we have done wrong—I told ye so! She dealt with me many a year. Poor Madge!—Right's right. She was no witch!"

"But that was the only way to try it," said the hump-backed tinker; "and if she was not a witch, why did she look like one!—I cannot abide ugly folks!"

The bystanders shook their heads. But whatever their remorse, it was diverted by a double sound: first, a loud hurrah from some of the mob who had loitered for pillage, and who now emerged from Adam's house, following two men, who, preceded by the terrible Graul, dancing before them, and tossing aloft her timbrel, bore in triumph the captured Eureka; and, secondly, the blast of a clarion at the distance, while up the street marched—horse and foot, with pike and banner—a goodly troop. The Lord Hastings in person led a royal force, by a night march, against a fresh outbreak of the rebels, not ten miles from the city, under Sir Geoffrey Gates, who had been lately arrested by the Lord Howard at Southampton—escaped—col-

lected a disorderly body of such restless men as are always disposed to take part in civil commotion, and now menaced London itself. At the sound of the clarion the valiant mob dispersed in all directions, for even at that day mobs had an instinct of terror at the approach of the military, and a quick reaction from outrage to the fear of retaliation.

But, at the sound of martial music, the tymbesteres silenced their own instruments, and instead of flying, they darted through the crowd, each to seek the other, and unite as for counsel. Graul, pointing to Mr. Sancroft's hostelry, whispered the bearers of the Eureka to seek refuge there for the present, and to bear their trophy with the dawn to Friar Bungey, at the Tower; and then, gliding nimbly through the fugitive rioters, sprang into the centre of the circle formed by her companions.

"Ye scent the coming battle," said the archtymbestere.

"Ay—ay—ay!" answered the sisterhood.

"But we have gone miles since noon—I am faint and weary!" said one amongst them.

Red Grisell, the youngest of the band, struck her comrade on the cheek—"Faint and weary, ronion, with blood and booty in the wind!"

The tymbesteres smiled grimly on their young sister; but the leader whispered "Hush!" and they stood for a second or two with outstretched throats—with dilated nostrils—with pent breath—listening to the clarion, and the hoofs, and the rattling armour;—the human vultures foretasting their feast of carnage; then, obedient to a sign from their chieftainess, they crept lightly and rapidly into the mouth of a neighbouring alley, where they cowered by the squalid huts,

concealed. The troop passed on—a gallant and serried band—horse and foot, about fifteen hundred men. As they filed up the thoroughfare, and the tramp of the last soldiers fell hollow on the starlit ground, the tymbesteres stole from their retreat, and, at the distance of some few hundred yards, followed the procession, with long, silent, stealthy strides,—as the meaner beasts, in the instinct of hungry cunning, follow the lion for the garbage of his prey.

CHAPTER V

THE FUGITIVES ARE CAPTURED—THE TYMBESTERES REAPPEAR—MOONLIGHT ON THE REVEL OF THE LIVING—MOONLIGHT ON THE SLUMBER OF THE DEAD

The father and child made their resting-place under the giant oak. They knew not whither to fly for refuge—the day and the night had become the same to them—the night menaced with robbers, the day with the mob. If return to their home was forbidden, where in the wide world a shelter for the would-be world-improver? Yet they despaired not, their hearts failed them not. The majestic splendour of the night, as it deepened in its solemn calm—as the shadows of the windless trees fell larger and sharper upon the silvery earth—as the skies grew mellower and more luminous in the strengthening starlight, inspired them with the serenity of faith—for night, to the earnest soul, opens the bible of the universe, and on the leaves of Heaven is written—"God is everywhere!"

Their hands were clasped, each in each—their pale faces were upturned; they spoke not, neither were they

conscious that they prayed, but their silence was thought, and the thought was worship.

Amidst the grief and solitude of the pure, there comes, at times, a strange and rapt serenity—a sleep-awake—over which the instinct of life beyond the grave glides like a noiseless dream; and ever that heaven that the soul yearns for is coloured by the fancies of the fond human heart,—each fashioning the above from the desires unsatisfied below.

"There," thought the musing maiden, "cruelty and strife shall cease—there, vanish the harsh differences of life—there, those whom we have loved and lost are found, and through the Son, who tasted of mortal sorrow, we are raised to the home of the Eternal Father!"

"And there," thought the aspiring sage, "the mind, dungeoned and chained below, rushes free into the realms of space—there, from every mystery falls the veil—there, the Omniscient smiles on those who, through the darkness of life, have fed that lamp—the soul—there, Thought, but the seed on earth, bursts into the flower, and ripens to the fruit!"

And on the several hope of both maid and sage the eyes of the angel stars smiled with a common promise.

At last, insensibly, and while still musing, so that slumber but continued the reverie into visions, father and daughter slept.

The night passed away; the dawn came slow and grey; the antlers of the deer stirred above the fern; the song of the nightingale was hushed; and just as the morning star waned back, while the reddening east announced the sun, and labour and trouble resumed their realm of day, a fierce band halted before those sleeping forms.

These men had been Lancastrian soldiers, and, re-

duced to plunder for a living, had, under Sir Geoffrey Gates, formed the most stalwart part of the wild disorderly force whom Hilyard and Coniers had led to Olney. They had heard of the new outbreak, headed by their ancient captain, Sir Geoffrey (who was supposed to have been instigated to his revolt by the gold and promises of the Lancastrian chiefs), and were on their way to join the rebels; but as war for them was but the name for booty, they felt the wonted instinct of the robber, when they caught sight of the old man and the fair maid.

Both Adam and his daughter wore, unhappily, the dresses in which they had left the court, and Sibyll's especially was that which seemed to betoken a certain rank and station.

"Awake—rouse ye!" said the captain of the band, roughly shaking the arm which encircled Sibyll's slender waist. Adam started, opened his eyes, and saw himself begirt by figures in rusty armour, with savage faces peering under their steel sallets.

"How came ye hither? Yon oak drops strange acorns," quoth the chief.

"Valiant sir!" replied Adam, still seated, and drawing his gown instinctively over Sibyll's face, which nestled on his bosom in slumber so deep and heavy, that the gruff voice had not broken it. "Valiant sir! we are forlorn and houseless—an old man and a simple girl. Some evil-minded persons invaded our home —we fled in the night—and——"

"Invaded your house! ha, it is clear," said the chief. "We know the rest."

At this moment Sibyll woke, and starting to her feet in astonishment and terror at the sight on which her eyes opened, her extreme beauty made a sensible effect upon the bravoes.

"Do not be daunted, young demoiselle," said the captain, with an air almost respectful,—"it is necessary thou and Sir John should follow us, but we will treat you well, and consult later on the ransom ye will pay us. Jock, discharge the young sumpter mule; put its load on the black one. We have no better equipment for thee, lady—but the first *haquenée* we find shall replace the mule, and meanwhile my knaves will heap their cloaks for a pillion."

"But what mean you!—you mistake us!" exclaimed Sibyll—"we are poor; we cannot ransom ourselves."

"Poor!—tut!" said the captain, pointing significantly to the costly robe of the maiden—"moreover his worship's wealth is well known. Mount in haste—we are pressed."

And without heeding the expostulations of Sibyll and the poor scholar, the rebel put his troop into motion, and marched himself at their head, with his lieutenant.

Sibyll found the subalterns sterner than their chief; for as Warner offered to resist, one of them lifted his gisarme, with a frightful oath, and Sibyll was the first to persuade her father to submit. She mildly, however, rejected the mule, and the two captives walked together in the midst of the troop.

"*Pardie!*" said the lieutenant, "I see little help to Sir Geoffrey in these recruits, captain!"

"Fool!" said the chief, disdainfully,—"if the rebellion fail, these prisoners may save our necks. Will Somers last night was to break into the house of Sir John Bourchier, for arms and moneys, of which the knight hath a goodly store. Be sure, Sir John slinked off in the siege, and this is he and his daughter. Thou

knowest he is one of the greatest knights, and the richest, whom the Yorkists boast of;—and we may name our own price for his ransom."

"But where lodge them, while we go to the battle?"

"Ned Porpustone hath a hostelry not far from the camp, and Ned is a good Lancastrian, and a man to be trusted."

"We have not searched the prisoners," said the lieutenant;—"they may have some gold in their pouches."

"Marry, when Will Somers storms a hive, little time does he leave to the bees to fly away with much honey! Natheless, thou mayest search the old knight, but civilly, and with gentle excuses."

"And the damsel?"

"Nay! that were unmannerly, and the milder our conduct, the larger the ransom—when we have great folks to deal with."

The lieutenant accordingly fell back to search Adam's gipsire, which contained only a book and a file, and then rejoined his captain, without offering molestation to Sibyll.

The mistake made by the bravo was at least so far not wholly unfortunate, that the notion of the high quality of the captives—for Sir John Bourchier was indeed a person of considerable station and importance (a notion favoured by the noble appearance of the scholar, and the delicate and high-born air of Sibyll)—procured for them all the respect compatible with the circumstances. They had not gone far before they entered a village, through which the ruffians marched with the most perfect impunity; for it was a strange feature in those civil wars, that the mass of the population, except in the northern districts, remained per-

fectly supine and neutral: and as the little band halted at a small inn to drink, the gossips of the village collected round them, with the same kind of indolent, careless curiosity, which is now evinced, in some hamlet, at the halt of a stage-coach. Here the captain learned, however, some intelligence important to his objects—viz., the night march of the troop under Lord Hastings, and the probability that the conflict was already begun. "If so," muttered the rebel, "we can see how the tide turns, before we endanger ourselves; and at the worst, our prisoners will bring something of prize-money."

While thus soliloquising, he spied one of those cumbrous vehicles of the day called *whirlicotes* * standing in the yard of the hostelry; and seizing upon it, *vi et armis,* in spite of all the cries and protestations of the unhappy landlord, he ordered his captives to enter, and recommenced his march. As the band proceeded farther on their way, they were joined by fresh troops, of the same class as themselves, and they pushed on gaily, till, about the hour of eight, they halted before the hostelry the captain had spoken of. It stood a little out of the high road, not very far from the village of Hadley, and the heath or chase of Gladsmoor, on which was fought, some time afterwards, the battle of Barnet. It was a house of good aspect, and considerable size, for it was much frequented by all caravanserais and travellers from the north to the metropolis. The landlord, at heart a stanch Lancastrian, who had served in the French wars, and contrived, no one knew how, to save moneys in the course of an adventurous

* Whirlicotes were in use from a very early period, but only among the great, till, in the reign of Richard II., his queen, Anne, introduced side-saddles, when the whirlicote fell out of fashion, but might be found at different hostelries on the main roads, for the accommodation of the infirm or aged.

life, gave to his hostelry the appellation and sign of the Talbot, in memory of the old hero of that name; and, hiring a tract of land, joined the occupation of a farmer to the dignity of a host. The house, which was built round a spacious quadrangle, represented the double character of its owner, one side being occupied by barns and a considerable range of stabling, while cows, oxen, and ragged colts, grouped amicably together, in a space railed off in the centre of the yard. At another side ran a large wooden staircase, with an open gallery, propped on wooden columns, conducting to numerous chambers, after the fashion of the Tabard, in Southwark, immortalised by Chaucer. Over the archway, on entrance, ran a labyrinth of sleeping lofts, for foot passengers and muleteers, and the side facing the entrance was nearly occupied by a vast kitchen, the common hall, and the bar, with the private parlour of the host, and two or three chambers in the second story. The whirlicote jolted and rattled into the yard. Sibyll and her father were assisted out of the vehicle, and, after a few words interchanged with the host, conducted by Master Porpustone himself up the spacious stairs into a chamber, well furnished and fresh littered, with repeated assurances of safety, provided they maintained silence, and attempted no escape.

"Ye are in time," said Ned Porpustone to the captain—"Lord Hastings made proclamation at daybreak that he gave the rebels two hours to disperse."

"Pest! I like not those proclamations. And the fellows stood their ground?"

"No; for Sir Geoffrey, like a wise soldier, *mended* the ground by retreating a mile to the left, and placing the wood between the Yorkists and himself. Hastings, by this, must have remarshalled his men. But to pass

the wood is slow work, and Sir Geoffrey's cross-bows are no doubt doing damage in the covert. Come in, while your fellows snatch a morsel without; five minutes are not thrown away on filling their bellies."

"Thanks, Ned—thou art a good fellow! and if all else fail, why Sir John's ransom shall pay the reckoning. Any news of bold Robin?"

"Ay! he has 'scaped with a whole skin, and gone back to the north," answered the host, leading the way to his parlour, where a flask of strong wine and some cold meats awaited his guest. "If Sir Geoffrey Gates can beat off the York troopers, tell him, from me, not to venture to London, but to fall back into the marches. He will be welcome there, I foreguess; for every northman is either for Warwick or for Lancaster; and the two must unite now, I trow."

"But Warwick is flown!" quoth the captain.

"Tush! he has only flown, as the falcon flies when he has a heron to fight with—wheeling and soaring. Woe to the heron when the falcon swoops! But you drink not!"

"No; I must keep the head cool to-day. For Hastings is a perilous captain. Thy fist, friend!—If I fall, I leave you Sir John and his girl, to wipe off old scores; if we beat off the Yorkists, I vow to Our Lady of Walsingham an image of wax, of the weight of myself." The marauder then started up, and strode to his men, who were snatching a hasty meal on the space before the hostel. He paused a moment or so, while his host whispered—

"Hastings was here before daybreak; but his men only got the sour beer; yours fight upon huff-cap."

"Up, men!—To your pikes!—Dress to the right!" thundered the captain, with a sufficient pause between

each sentence. "The York lozels have starved on stale beer—shall they beat huff-cap and Lancaster? Frisk and fresh—up with the Antelope * banner, and long live Henry the Sixth!"

The sound of the shout that answered this harangue shook the thin walls of the chamber in which the prisoners were confined, and they heard with joy the departing tramp of the soldiers. In a short time, Master Porpustone himself, a corpulent, burly fellow, with a face by no means unprepossessing, mounted to the chamber, accompanied by a comely housekeeper, linked to him, as scandal said, by ties less irksome than Hymen's, and both bearing ample provisions, with rich pigment and lucid clary,† which they spread with great formality on an oak table before their involuntary guests.

"Eat, your worship, eat!" cried mine host, heartily. "Eat, lady bird!—nothing like eating to kill time and banish care. Fortune of war, Sir John—fortune of war—never be daunted! Up to-day—down to-morrow. Come what may—York or Lancaster—still a rich man always falls on his legs. Five hundred marks or so to the captain; a noble or two, out of pure generosity, to Ned Porpustone (I scorn extortion), and you and the fair young dame may breakfast at home to-morrow, unless the captain or his favourite lieutenant is taken prisoner; and then, you see, they will buy off their necks by letting you out of the bag. Eat, I say—eat!"

"Verily," said Adam, seating himself solemnly, and preparing to obey, "I confess I'm a hungered, and the

* The antelope was one of the Lancastrian badges. The special cognisance of Henry VI. was two feathers in saltire.

† Clary was wine clarified.

pasty hath a savoury odour; but I pray thee to tell me why I am called Sir John?—Adam is my baptismal name."

"Ha! ha! good—very good, your honour—to be sure, and your father's name before you. We are all sons of Adam, and every son, I trow, has a just right and a lawful to his father's name."

With that, followed by the housekeeper, the honest landlord, chuckling heartily, rolled his goodly bulk from the chamber, which he carefully locked.

"Comprehendest thou yet, Sibyll?"

"Yes, dear sir and father—they mistake us for fugitives of mark and importance; and when they discover their error, no doubt we shall go free. Courage, dear father!"

"Me seemeth," quoth Adam, almost merrily, as the good man filled his cup from the wine flagon—"me seemeth that, if the mistake could continue, it would be no weighty misfortune—ha! ha!"—he stopped abruptly in the unwonted laughter, put down the cup—his face fell. "Ah, heaven forgive me!—and the poor Eureka and faithful Madge!"

"Oh, father! fear not; we are not without protection. Lord Hastings is returned to London—we will seek him; he will make our cruel neighbours respect thee. And Madge—poor Madge will be so happy at our return, for they could not harm her;—a woman—old and alone; no—no, man is not fierce enough for that!"

"Let us so pray; but thou eatest not, child!"

"Anon, father—anon; I am sick and weary. But, nay—nay, I am better now—better. Smile again, father. I am hungered, too; yes, indeed and in sooth, yes.—Ah, sweet St. Mary, give me life and strength, and hope and patience, for His dear sake!"

The stirring events which had within the last few weeks diversified the quiet life of the scholar had somewhat roused him from his wonted abstraction, and made the actual world a more sensible and living thing than it had hitherto seemed to his mind; but now, his repast ended, the quiet of the place (for the inn was silent and almost deserted) with the fumes of the wine —a luxury he rarely tasted—operated soothingly upon his thought and fancy, and plunged him into those reveries, so dear alike to poet and mathematician. To the thinker, the most trifling external object often suggests ideas, which, like Homer's chain, extend, link after link, from earth to heaven. The sunny motes, that in a glancing column came through the lattice, called Warner from the real day—the day of strife and blood, with thousands hard by driving each other to the Hades—and led his scheming fancy into the ideal and abstract day—the theory of light itself; and the theory suggested mechanism, and mechanism called up the memory of his oracle—old Roger Bacon; and that memory revived the great friar's hints in the Opus magus—hints which outlined the grand invention of the telescope: and so, as over some dismal precipice a bird swings itself to and fro upon the airy bough, the schoolman's mind played with its quivering fancy, and folded its calm wings above the verge of terror.

Occupied with her own dreams, Sibyll respected those of her father; and so in silence, not altogether mournful, the morning and the noon passed, and the sun was sloping westward, when a confused sound below called Sibyll's gaze to the lattice, which looked over the balustrade of the staircase, into the vast yard. She saw several armed men—their harness hewed and battered—quaffing ale or wine in haste, and heard one of them say to the landlord—

"All is lost! Sir Geoffrey Gates still holds out, but it is butcher work. The troops of Lord Hastings gather round him as a net round the fish!"

Hastings!—that name!—he was at hand!—he was near!—they would be saved! Sibyll's heart beat loudly.

"And the captain?" asked Porpustone.

"Alive, when I last saw him; but we must be off. In another hour all will be hurry and skurry, flight and chase."

At this moment from one of the barns there emerged, one by one, the female vultures of the battle. The tymbesteres who had tramped all night to the spot, had slept off their fatigue during the day, and appeared on the scene as the neighbouring strife waxed low, and the dead and the dying began to cumber the gory ground. Graul Skellet, tossing up her timbrel, darted to the fugitives and grinned a ghastly grin when she heard the news—for the tymbesteres were all loyal to a king who loved women, and who had a wink and a jest for every tramping wench! The troopers tarried not, however, for further converse, but having satisfied their thirst, hurried and clattered from the yard. At the sight of the ominous tymbesteres Sibyll had drawn back, without daring to close the lattice she had opened; and the women, seating themselves on a bench, began sleeking their long hair and smoothing their garments from the scraps of straw and litter which betokened the nature of their resting-place.

"Ho, girls!" said the fat landlord, "ye will pay me for board and bed, I trust, by a show of your craft. I have two right worshipful lodgers up yonder, whose lattice looks on the yard, and whom ye may serve to divert."

Sibyll trembled, and crept to her father's side.

"And," continued the landlord, "if they like the clash of your musicals, it may bring ye a groat or so, to help ye on your journey. By the way—whither wend ye, wenches?"

"To a bonny, jolly fair," answered the sinister voice of Graul—

"Where a mighty SHOWMAN dyes
The greenery into red;
Where, presto! at the word
Lies his Fool without a head—
Where he gathers in the crowd
To the trumpet and the drum,
With a jingle and a tinkle,
Graul's merry lasses come!"

As the two closing lines were caught by the rest of the tymbesteres, striking their timbrels, the crew formed themselves into a semicircle, and commenced their dance. Their movements, though wanton and fantastic, were not without a certain wild grace; and the address with which, from time to time they cast up their instruments and caught them in descending, joined to the surprising agility with which, in the evolutions of the dance, one seemed now to chase, now to fly from, the other, darting to and fro through the ranks of her companions, winding and wheeling—the chain now seemingly broken in disorder, now united link to link, as the whole force of the instruments clashed in chorus—made an exhibition inexpressibly attractive to the vulgar.

The tymbesteres, however, as may well be supposed, failed to draw Sibyll or Warner to the window; and they exchanged glances of spite and disappointment.

"Marry," quoth the landlord, after a hearty laugh

at the diversion, "I do wrong to be so gay, when so many good friends perhaps are lying stark and cold. But what then? Life is short—laugh while we can!"

"Hist!" whispered his housekeeper; "art wode, Ned? Wouldst thou have it discovered that thou hast such quality birds in the cage—noble Yorkists—at the very time when Lord Hastings himself may be riding this way after the victory?"

"Always right, Meg—and I'm an ass!" answered the host, in the same undertone. "But my good nature will be the death of me some day. Poor gentlefolks, they must be unked dull, yonder!"

"If the Yorkists come hither—which we shall soon know by the scouts—we must shift Sir John and the damsel to the back of the house, over thy tap-room."

"Manage it as thou wilt, Meg—but, thou seest, they keep quiet and snug. Ho, ho, ho! that tall tymbestere is supple enough to make an owl hold his sides with laughing. Ah! hollo, there, tymbesteres—*ribaudes*—tramps—the devil's chickens—down, down!"

The host was too late in his order. With a sudden spring, Graul, who had long fixed her eye on the open lattice of the prisoners, had wreathed herself round one of the pillars that supported the stairs, swung lightly over the balustrade—and with a faint shriek, the startled Sibyll beheld the tymbestere's hard, fierce eyes, glaring upon her through the lattice, as her long arm extended the timbrel for largess. But no sooner had Sibyll raised her face than she was recognised.

"Ho! the wizard and the wizard's daughter! Ho! the girl who glamours lords, and wears sarcenet and lawn! Ho! the nigromancer, who starves the poor!"

At the sound of their leader's cry, up sprang, up climbed the hellish sisters! One after the other, they darted through the lattice into the chamber.

"The ronions! the foul fiend has distraught them!" groaned the landlord, motionless with astonishment. But the more active Meg, calling to the varlets and scullions, whom the tymbesteres had collected in the yard, to follow her, bounded up the stairs, unlocked the door, and arrived in time to throw herself between the captives and the harpies, whom Sibyll's rich super-tunic and Adam's costly gown had inflamed into all the rage of appropriation.

"What mean ye, wretches?" cried the bold Meg, purple with anger. "Do ye come for this into honest folk's hostelries, to rob their guests in broad day—noble guests—guests of mark! Oh, Sir John! Sir John! what will ye think of us?"

"Oh, Sir John! Sir John!" groaned the landlord, who had now moved his slow bulk into the room. "They shall be scourged, Sir John! They shall be put in the stocks—they shall be brent with hot iron—they——"

"Ha, ha!" interrupted the terrible Graul, "Guests of mark—noble guests, trow ye! Adam Warner, the wizard, and his daughter, whom we drove last night from their den, as many a time, sisters, and many, we have driven the rats from the charnel and cave."

"Wizard! Adam! Blood of my life!" stammered the landlord—"is his name Adam, after all?"

"My name is Adam Warner," said the old man, with dignity; "no wizard—a humble scholar, and a poor gentleman, who has injured no one. Wherefore, women—if women ye are—would ye injure mine and me?"

"Faugh—wizard!" returned Graul, folding her arms. "Didst thou not send thy spawn, yonder, to spoil our mart with her gittern? Hast thou not taught

her the spells to win love from the noble and young? Ho, how daintily the young witch robes herself? Ho! laces, and satins, and we shiver with the cold, and parch with the heat—and——doff thy tunic, minion!"

And Graul's fierce gripe was on the robe, when the landlord interposed his huge arm, and held her at bay.

"Softly, my sucking dove, softly! Clear the room, and be off!"

"Look to thyself, man. If thou harbourest a wizard, against law—a wizard whom King Edward hath given up to the people—look to thy barns, they shall burn; look to thy cattle—they shall rot; look to thy secrets—they shall be told. Lancastrian, thou shalt hang! We go—we go! We have friends among the mailed men of York. We go—we will return! Woe to thee, if thou harbourest the wizard and the succuba!"

With that, Graul moved slowly to the door. Host and housekeeper, varlet, groom, and scullion, made way for her, in terror; and still, as she moved, she kept her eyes on Sibyll, till her sisters, following in successive file, shut out the hideous aspect; and Meg, ordering away her gaping train, closed the door.

The host and the housekeeper then gazed gravely at each other. Sibyll lay in her father's arms breathing hard and convulsively. The old man's face bent over her in silence.

Meg drew aside her master. "You must rid the house at once of these folks. I have heard talk of yon tymbesteres; they are awsome in spite and malice. Every man to himself!"

"But the poor old gentleman, so mild—and the maid, so winsome!"

The last remark did not over-please the comely Meg. She advanced at once to Adam, and said, shortly—

"Master—whether wizard or not, is no affair of a poor landlord, whose house is open to all; but ye have had food and wine—please to pay the reckoning, and God speed ye—ye are free to depart."

"We can pay you, mistress!" exclaimed Sibyll, springing up. "We have moneys yet. Here—here!" and she took from her gipsire the broad pieces which poor Madge's precaution had placed therein, and which the bravoes had fortunately spared.

The sight of the gold somewhat softened the housewife.—"Lord Hastings is known to us," continued Sibyll, perceiving the impression she had made; "suffer us to rest here till he pass this way, and ye will find yourselves repaid for the kindness."

"By my troth," said the landlord, "ye are most welcome to all my poor house containeth; and as for these tymbesteres, I value them not a straw. No one can say Ned Porpustone is an ill man or inhospitable. Whoever can pay reasonably, is sure of good wine and civility at the Talbot."

With these and many similar protestations and assurances, which were less heartily re-echoed by the housewife, the landlord begged to conduct them to an apartment not so liable to molestation; and after having led them down the principal stairs, through the bar, and thence up a narrow flight of steps, deposited them in a chamber at the back of the house, and lighted a sconce therein—for it was now near the twilight. He then insisted on seeing after their evening meal, and vanished with his assistant. The worthy pair were now of the same mind: for guests known to Lord Hastings, it was worth braving the threats of the tym-

besteres; especially since Lord Hastings, it seems, had just beaten the Lancastrians.

But, alas! while the active Meg was busy on the hippocras, and the worthy landlord was inspecting the savoury operations of the kitchen, a vast uproar was heard without. A troop of disorderly Yorkist soldiers, who had been employed in dispersing the flying rebels, rushed helter skelter into the house, and poured into the kitchen, bearing with them the detested tymbesteres who had encountered them on their way. Among these soldiers were those who had congregated at Master Sancroft's the day before, and they were well prepared to support the cause of their griesly paramours. Lord Hastings himself had retired for the night to a farm-house nearer the field of battle than the hostel; and as in those days discipline was lax enough after a victory, the soldiers had a right to licence. Master Porpustone found himself completely at the mercy of these brawling customers, the more rude and disorderly from the remembrance of the sour beer in the morning, and Graul Skellet's assurances that Master Porpustone was a malignant Lancastrian. They laid hands on all the provisions in the house, tore the meats from the spit, devouring them half raw; set the casks running over the floors; and while they swilled and swore, and filled the place with the uproar of a hell broke loose, Graul Skellet, whom the lust for the rich garments of Sibyll still fired and stung, led her followers up the stairs towards the deserted chamber. Mine host perceived, but did not dare openly to resist the foray; but as he was really a good-natured knave, and as, moreover, he feared ill consequences might ensue if any friends of Lord Hastings were spoiled, outraged—nay, peradventure, murdered—in his house, he re-

solved, at all events, to assist the escape of his guests. Seeing the ground thus clear of the tymbesteres, he therefore stole from the riotous scene, crept up the back stairs, gained the chamber to which he had so happily removed his persecuted lodgers, and making them, in a few words, sensible that he was no longer able to protect them, and that the tymbesteres were now returned with an armed force to back their malice, conducted them safely to a wide casement only some three or four feet from the soil of the solitary garden, and bade them escape and save themselves.

"The farm," he whispered, "where they say my Lord Hastings is quartered, is scarcely a mile and a half away; pass the garden wicket—leave Gladsmore Chase to the left hand—take the path to the right, through the wood, and you will see its roof among the apple-blossoms. Our Lady protect you and say a word to my lord on behalf of poor Ned."

Scarce had he seen his guests descend into the garden, before he heard the yell of the tymbesteres, in the opposite part of the house, as they ran from room to room after their prey. He hastened to regain the kitchen; and presently the tymbesteres, breathless and panting, rushed in, and demanded their victims.

"Marry," quoth the landlord, with the self-possession of a cunning old soldier—"think ye I cumbered my house with such cattle, after pretty lasses like you had given me the inkling of what they were? No wizard shall fly away with the sign of the Talbot, if I can help it. They skulked off, I can promise ye, and did not even mount a couple of broomsticks which I handsomely offered for their ride up to London."

"Thunder and bombards!" cried a trooper, already half-drunk, and seizing Graul in his iron arms—"put

the conjuror out of thine head now, and buss me, Graul —buss me!"

Then the riot became hideous; the soldiers, following their comrade's example, embraced the grim glee-women, tearing and hauling them to and fro, one from the other, round and round, dancing, hallooing, chanting, howling, by the blaze of a mighty fire—many a rough face and hard hand smeared with blood still wet, communicated the stain to the cheeks and garb of those foul feres, and the whole revel becoming so unutterably horrible and ghastly, that even the veteran landlord fled from the spot, trembling and crossing himself:—And so, streaming athwart the lattice, and silvering over that fearful merry-making, rose the moon!

But when fatigue and drunkenness had done their work, and the soldiers fell one over the other upon the floor, the tables, the benches, into the heavy sleep of riot, Graul suddenly rose from amidst the huddled bodies, and then, silently as ghouls from a burial-ground, her sisters emerged also from their resting-places beside the sleepers. The dying light of the fire contended but feebly with the livid rays of the moon, and played fantastically over the gleaming robes of the tymbesteres. They stood erect for a moment, listening, Graul with her finger on her lips; then they glided to the door, opened and reclosed it—darted across the yard, scaring the beasts that slept there; the watch-dog barked, but drew back, bristling, and showing his fangs, as Red Grisell, undaunted, pointed her knife, and Graul flung him a red peace-sop of meat. They launched themselves through the open entrance, gained the space beyond, and scoured away to the battle-field.

Meanwhile, Sibyll and her father were still under

the canopy of heaven, they had scarcely passed the garden and entered the fields, when they saw horsemen riding to and fro in all directions. Sir Geoffrey Gates, the rebel leader, had escaped; the reward of three hundred marks was set on his head, and the riders were in search of the fugitive. The human form itself had become a terror to the hunted outcasts: they crept under a thick hedge till the horsemen had disappeared, and then resumed their way. They gained the wood; but there again they halted at the sound of voices, and withdrew themselves under covert of some entangled and trampled bushes. This time it was but a party of peasants, whom curiosity had led to see the field of battle, and who were now returning home. Peasants and soldiers both were human, and therefore to be shunned by those whom the age itself put out of the pale of law. At last, the party also left the path free; and now it was full night. They pursued their way—they cleared the wood—before them lay the field of battle; and a deeper silence seemed to fall over the world! The first stars had risen, but not yet the moon. The gleam of armour from prostrate bodies, which it had mailed in vain, reflected the quiet rays; here and there flickered watchfires, where sentinels were set, but they were scattered and remote. The outcasts paused and shuddered, but there seemed no holier way for their feet; and the roof of the farmer's homestead slept on the opposite side of the field, amidst white orchard blossoms, whitened still more by the stars. They went on, hand in hand—the dead, after all, were less terrible than the living. Sometimes a stern, upturned face, distorted by the last violent agony, the eyes unclosed and glazed, encountered them with its stony stare; but the weapon was powerless in the stiff hand—the

menace and the insult came not from the hueless lips —persecution reposed, at last, in the lap of slaughter. They had gone midway through the field, when they heard from a spot where the corpses lay thickest piled, a faint voice calling upon God for pardon; and, suddenly, it was answered by a tone of fiercer agony—that did not pray, but curse.

By a common impulse, the gentle wanderers moved silently to the spot.

The sufferer, in prayer, was a youth scarcely passed from boyhood: his helm had been cloven, his head was bare, and his long light hair, clotted with gore, fell over his shoulders. Beside him lay a strong-built, powerful form, which writhed in torture, pierced under the arm, by a Yorkist arrow, and the shaft still projected from the wound—and the man's curse answered the boy's prayer.

"Peace to thy parting soul, brother!" said Warner, bending over the man.

"Poor sufferer!" said Sibyll to the boy; "cheer thee; we will send succour; thou mayst live yet!"

"Water! water!—hell and torture!—water, I say!" groaned the man; "one drop of water!"

It was the captain of the marauders who had captured the wanderers.

"Thine arm! lift me! move me! That evil man scares my soul from heaven!" gasped the boy.

And Adam preached penitence to the one that cursed, and Sibyll knelt down and prayed with the one that prayed.—And up rose the moon!

Lord Hastings sat, with his victorious captains,—over mead, morat, and wine—in the humble hall of the farm.

"So," said he, "we have crushed the last embers of

the rebellion! This Sir Geoffrey Gates is a restless and resolute spirit; pity he escapes again for further mischief. But the house of Nevile, that over-shadowed the rising race, hath fallen at last—a waisall, brave sirs, to the new men!"

The door was thrown open, and an old soldier entered abruptly.

"My lord! my lord! Oh! my poor son! he cannot be found! The women, who ever follow the march of soldiers, will be on the ground to despatch the wounded, that they may rifle the corpses! O God! if my son—my boy—my only son——"

"I wist not, my brave Mervil, that thou hadst a son in our bands; yet I know each man by name and sight. Courage! Our wounded have been removed, and sentries are placed to guard the field!"

"Sentries! O my lord, knowest thou not that they wink at the crime that plunders the dead? Moreover, these corpse-riflers creep stealthily and unseen, as the red earth-worms, to the carcase. Give me some few of thy men—give me warrant to search the field! My son—my boy—not sixteen summers—and his mother!"—

The man stopped, and sobbed.

"Willingly!" said the gentle Hastings, "willingly! And woe to the sentries if it be as thou sayest! I will go myself, and see!—Torches there—what ho?—the good captain careth even for his dead!—Thy son! I marvel I knew him not!—Whom served he under?"

"My lord! my lord! pardon him! He is but a boy—they misled him!—he fought for the rebels. He crossed my path to-day—my arm was raised—we knew each other, and he fled from his father's sword!—Just as the strife was ended I saw him again—I saw him

fall!—O mercy, mercy! do not let him perish of his wounds or by the rifler's knife, even though a rebel!"

"*Homo sum!*" quoth the noble chief, "I am a man! and, even in these bloody times, Nature commands when she speaks in a father's voice! Mervil! I marked thee to-day! Thou art a brave fellow. I meant thee advancement—I give thee, instead, thy son's pardon, if he lives—ten masses if he died as a soldier's son should die, no matter under what flag—antelope or lion, pierced manfully in the breast—his feet to the foe! Come, I will search with thee!"

The boy yielded up his soul while Sibyll prayed, and her sweet voice soothed the last pang; and the man ceased to curse while Adam spoke of God's power and mercy, and his breath ebbed, gasp upon gasp, away. While thus detained, the wanderers saw not pale, fleeting figures, that had glided to the ground, and moved, gleaming, irregular, and rapid, as marsh-fed vapours, from heap to heap of the slain. With a loud, wild cry, the robber Lancastrian half sprung to his feet, in the paroxysm of the last struggle, and then fell on his face —a corpse!

The cry reached the tymbesteres, and Graul rose from a body from which she had extracted a few coins smeared with blood, and darted to the spot; and so, as Adam raised his face from contemplating the dead, whose last moments he had sought to soothe, the Alecto of the battle-field stood before him, her knife bare in her gory hand. Red Grisell, who had just left (with a spurn of wrath—for the pouch was empty) the corpse of a soldier, round whose neck she had twined her hot clasp the day before, sprang towards Sibyll; the rest of the sisterhood flocked to the place, and laughed in glee as they beheld their unexpected prey.

The danger was horrible and imminent; no pity was seen in those savage eyes. The wanderers prepared for death—when, suddenly, torches flashed over the ground. A cry was heard—"See, the riflers of the dead!" Armed men bounded forward, and the startled wretches uttered a shrill unearthly scream, and fled from the spot, leaping over the carcases, and doubling and winding, till they had vanished into the darkness of the wood.

"Provost!" said a commanding voice, "hang me up those sentinels at daybreak!"

"My son! my boy! speak, Hal—speak to me. He is here—he is found!" exclaimed the old soldier, kneeling beside the corpse at Sibyll's feet.

"My lord! my beloved! my Hastings!" And Sibyll fell insensible before the chief.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUBTLE CRAFT OF RICHARD OF GLOUCESTER

It was some weeks after the defeat of Sir Geoffrey Gates, and Edward was at Shene, with his gay court. Reclined at length within a pavilion placed before a cool fountain, in the royal gardens, and surrounded by his favourites, the king listened indolently to the music of his minstrels, and sleeked the plumage of his favourite falcon, perched upon his wrist. And scarcely would it have been possible to recognise in that lazy voluptuary the dauntless soldier, before whose lance, as deer before the hound, had so lately fled, at bloody Erpingham, the chivalry of the Lancastrian Rose; but remote from the pavilion, and in one of the deserted

bowling alleys, Prince Richard and Lord Montagu walked apart, in earnest conversation. The last of these noble personages had remained inactive during the disturbances, and Edward had not seemed to entertain any suspicion of his participation in the anger and revenge of Warwick. The king took from him, it is true, the lands and earldom of Northumberland, and restored them to the Percy, but he had accompanied this act with gracious excuses, alleging the necessity of conciliating the head of an illustrious house, which had formally entered into allegiance to the dynasty of York, and bestowed upon his early favourite, in compensation, the dignity of marquis.* The politic king, in thus depriving Montagu of the wealth and the retainers of the Percy, reduced him, as a younger brother, to a comparative poverty and insignificance, which left him dependent on Edward's favour, and deprived him, as he thought, of the power of active mischief; at the same time, more than ever, he insisted on Montagu's society, and summoning his attendance at the court, kept his movements in watchful surveillance.

"Nay, my lord," said Richard, pursuing with much unction the conversation he had commenced, "you wrong me much, Holy Paul be my witness, if you doubt the deep sorrow I feel at the unhappy events which have led to the severance of my kinsmen! England seems to me to have lost its smile, in losing the glory of Earl Warwick's presence, and Clarence is my brother, and was my friend; and thou knowest, Montagu, thou knowest, how dear to my heart was the hope to win for my wife and lady the gentle Anne."

* Montagu said, bitterly, of this new dignity, "He takes from me the Earldom and domains of Northumberland, and makes me a Marquis, with a pie's nest to maintain it withal."—Stowe, Edw. IV.—Warkworth Chronicle.

"Prince," said Montagu, abruptly, "though the pride of Warwick and the honour of our house may have forbidden the public revelation of the cause which fired my brother to rebellion, thou, at least, art privy to a secret——"

"Cease!" exclaimed Richard, in great emotion, probably sincere, for his face grew livid, and its muscles were nervously convulsed. "I would not have that remembrance stirred from its dark repose. I would fain forget a brother's hasty frenzy, in the belief of his lasting penitence." He paused and turned his face, gasped for breath, and resumed—"The cause justified the father; it had justified me in the father's cause, had Warwick listened to my suit, and given me the right to deem insult to his daughter injury to myself."

"And if, my prince," returned Montagu, looking round him, and in a subdued whisper, "if yet the hand of Lady Anne were pledged to you?"

"Tempt me not—tempt me not!" cried the prince, crossing himself. Montagu continued—

"Our cause, I mean Lord Warwick's cause, is not lost, as the king deems it."

"Proceed," said Richard, casting down his eyes, while his countenance settled back into its thoughtful calm.

"I mean," renewed Montagu, "that in my brother's flight, his retainers were taken by surprise. In vain the king would confiscate his lands—he cannot confiscate men's hearts. If Warwick to-morrow set his armed heel upon the soil, trowest thou, sagacious and clear-judging prince, that the strife which would follow would be but another field of Losecote?* Thou

* The battle of Erpingham, so popularly called, in contempt of the rebellious runaways.

hast heard of the honours with which King Louis has received the earl. Will that king grudge him ships and moneys? And meanwhile, thinkest thou that his favourers sleep?"

"But if he land, Montagu," said Richard, who seemed to listen with an attention that awoke all the hopes of Montagu, coveting so powerful an ally—"if he land, and make open war on Edward—we must say the word boldly—what intent can he proclaim? It is not enough to say King Edward shall not reign; the earl must say also what king England should elect!"

"Prince," answered Montagu, "before I reply to that question, vouchsafe to hear my own hearty desire and wish. Though the king has deeply wronged my brother, though he has despoiled me of the lands, which were, peradventure, not too large a reward for twenty victories in his cause, and restored them to the house that ever ranked amongst the strongholds of his Lancastrian foe, yet often, when I am most resentful, the memory of my royal seigneur's past love and kindness comes over me,—above all, the thought of the solemn contract between his daughter and my son;—and I feel (now the first heat of natural anger at an insult offered to my niece is somewhat cooled), that if Warwick *did* land, I could almost forget my brother for my king."

"*Almost!*" repeated Richard, smiling.

"I am plain with your highness, and say but what I feel. I would even now fain trust, that by your mediation, the king may be persuaded to make such concessions and excuses as in truth would not misbeseem him, to the father of Lady Anne, and his own kinsman; and that yet, ere it be too late, I may be spared the bitter choice between the ties of blood and my allegiance to the king."

"But failing this hope (which I devoutly share),—and Edward, it must be owned, could scarcely trust to a letter, still less to a messenger, the confession of a crime—failing this, and your brother land, and I side with him for love of Anne, pledged to me as a bride,—what king would he ask England to elect?"

"The Duke of Clarence loves you dearly, Lord Richard," replied Montagu. "Knowest thou not how often he hath said, 'By sweet St. George, if Gloucester would join me, I would make Edward know we were all one man's sons, who should be more preferred and promoted than strangers of his wife's blood.'" *

Richard's countenance for a moment evinced disappointment; but he said drily, "Then Warwick would propose that Clarence should be king?—and the great barons, and the honest burghers, and the sturdy yeomen, would, you think, not stand aghast at the manifesto which declares not that the dynasty of York is corrupt and faulty, but that the younger son should depose the elder—that younger son, mark me! not only unknown in war, and green in council, but gay, giddy, vacillating—not subtle of wit, and resolute of deed, as he who *so* aspires should be!—Montagu—a vain dream!"—Richard paused, and then resumed, in a low tone, as to himself—"Oh! not so—not so are kings cozened from their thrones—a pretext must blind men—say they are illegitimate—say they are too young—too feeble—too anything—glide into their place—and then, not war—not war. You *slay* them not—they *disappear!*" The duke's face, as he muttered, took a sinister and a dark expression—his eyes seemed to gaze on space. Suddenly recovering himself as from a reverie, he turned, with his wonted sleek

* Hall.

and gracious aspect, to the startled Montagu, and said, "I was but quoting from Italian history, good my lord—wise lore, but terrible, and murderous. Return we to the point. Thou seest Clarence could not reign, and as well," added the prince, with a slight sigh—"as well or better (for, without vanity, I have more of a king's metal in me), might I—even *I*—aspire to my brother's crown!" Here he paused, and glanced rapidly and keenly at the marquis; but whether or not in these words he had sought to sound Montagu, and that glance sufficed to show him it were bootless or dangerous to speak more plainly, he resumed with an altered voice—"Enough of this: Warwick will discover the idleness of such design; and if he land, his trumpets must ring to a more kindling measure. John Montagu, thinkest thou that Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrians will not rather win thy brother to their side? *There* is the true danger to Edward—none elsewhere."

"And if so?" said Montagu, watching his listener's countenance. Richard started, and gnawed his lip. "Mark me," continued the marquis—"I repeat that I would fain hope yet, that Edward may appease the earl; but if not, and rather than rest dishonoured and aggrieved, Warwick link himself with Lancaster, and thou join him as Anne's betrothed and lord, what matters who the puppet on the throne!—we and thou shall be the rulers; or, if thou reject," added the marquis, artfully, as he supposed, exciting the jealousy of the duke—"Henry has a son—a fair, and they say, a gallant prince—carefully tutored in the knowledge of our English laws, and who, my lord of Oxford, somewhat in the confidence of the Lancastrians, assures me, would rejoice to forget old feuds, and call Warwick 'father,' and my niece 'Lady and Princess of Wales.'"

With all his dissimulation, Richard could ill conceal the emotions of fear—of jealousy—of dismay, which these words excited.

"Lord Oxford!" he cried, stamping his foot. "Ha! John de Vere—pestilent traitor, plottest thou thus? But we can yet seize thy person, and will have thy head."

Alarmed at this burst, and suddenly made aware that he had laid his breast too bare to the boy, whom he had thought to dazzle and seduce to his designs, Montagu said, falteringly—"But, my lord, our talk is but in confidence: at your own prayer, with your own plighted word, of prince and of kinsman, that, whatever my frankness may utter, should not pass farther. Take," added the nobleman, with proud dignity—"take my head rather than Lord Oxford's; for I deserve death, if I reveal to one, who can betray, the loose words of another's intimacy and trust!"

"Forgive me, my cousin," said Richard, meekly; "my love to Anne transported me too far. Lord Oxford's words, as you report them, had conjured up a rival, and—but enough of this.—And now," added the prince, gravely, and with a steadiness of voice and manner that gave a certain majesty to his small stature—"now, as thou hast spoken openly, openly also will I reply. I feel the wrong to the Lady Anne as to myself; deeply, burningly, and lastingly, will it live in my mind; it may be, sooner or later, to rise to gloomy deeds, even against Edward and Edward's blood. But no, I have the king's solemn protestations of repentance; his guilty passion has burned into ashes, and he now sighs—gay Edward—for a lighter fere. I cannot join with Clarence, less can I join with the Lancastrians. My birth makes me the prop of the throne of

York—to guard it as a heritage (who knows) that may descend to mine—nay, to me! And, mark me well! if Warwick attempt a war of fratricide, he is lost; if, on the other hand, he can submit himself to the hands of Margaret, stained with his father's gore, the success of an hour will close in the humiliation of a life. There is a third way left, and that way thou hast piously and wisely shown. Let him, like me, resign revenge, and, not exacting a confession and a cry of *peccavi,* which no king, much less King Edward the Plantagenet, can whimper forth—let him accept such overtures as his liege can make. His titles and castles shall be restored, equal possessions to those thou hast lost assigned to thee, and all my guerdon (if I can so negotiate) as all my ambition,—his daughter's hand. Muse on this, and for the peace and weal of the realm so limit all thy schemes, my lord and cousin!"

With these words the prince pressed the hand of the marquis, and walked slowly towards the king's pavilion.

"Shame on my ripe manhood and lore of life," muttered Montagu, enraged against himself and deeply mortified. "How sentence by sentence, and step by step yon crafty pigmy led me on, till all our projects —all our fears and hopes are revealed to him, who but views them as a foe. Anne betrothed to one, who even in fiery youth can thus beguile and dupe! Warwick decoyed hither upon fair words, at the will of one whom Italy (boy, there thou didst forget thy fence of cunning!) has taught how the great are slain not, but *disappear!* No, even this defeat instructs me now. But right—right! the reign of Clarence is impossible, and that of Lancaster is ill-omened and portentous; and after all, my son stands nearer to the throne than

any subject, in his alliance with the Lady Elizabeth. Would to heaven the king could yet——But out on me! this is no hour for musing on mine own aggrandisement; rather let me fly at once and warn Oxford—imperilled by my imprudence—against that dark eye which hath set watch upon his life."

At that thought, which showed that Montagu, with all his worldliness, was not forgetful of one of the first duties of knight and gentleman, the marquis hastened up the alley—in the opposite direction to that taken by Gloucester—and soon found himself in the court-yard, where a goodly company were mounting their *haquenées* and palfreys, to enjoy a summer ride through the neighbouring chase. The cold and half-slighting salutations of these minions of the hour, which now mortified the Nevile, despoiled of the possessions that had rewarded his long and brilliant services,—contrasting forcibly the reverential homage he had formerly enjoyed, stung Montagu to the quick.

"Whither ride you, brother marquis?" said young Lord Dorset (Elizabeth's son by her first marriage), as Montagu called to his single squire, who was in waiting with his horse. "Some secret expedition, methinks, for I have known the day when the Lord Montagu never rode from his king's palace with less than thirty squires."

"Since my Lord Dorset prides himself on his memory," answered the scornful lord, "he may remember also the day when, if a Nevile mounted in haste, he bade the first Woodville he saw hold the stirrup."

And regarding "the brother-marquis" with a stately eye that silenced and awed retort, the long-descended Montagu passed the courtiers, and rode slowly on till out of sight of the palace; he then pushed into a hand

gallop, and halted not till he had reached London, and gained the house in which, then, dwelt the Earl of Oxford, the most powerful of all the Lancastrian nobles not in exile, and who had hitherto temporised with the reigning house.

Two days afterwards the news reached Edward that Lord Oxford and Jasper of Pembroke—uncle to the boy afterwards Henry VII.—had sailed from England.

The tidings reached the king in his chamber, where he was closeted with Gloucester. The conference between them seemed to have been warm and earnest, for Edward's face was flushed, and Gloucester's brow was perturbed and sullen.

"Now Heaven be praised!" cried the king, extending to Richard the letter which communicated the flight of the disaffected lords. "We have two enemies the less in our roiaulme, and many a barony the more to confiscate to our kingly wants. Ha—ha! these Lancastrians only serve to enrich us. Frowning still, Richard; smile, boy!"

"*Foi de mon âme,* Edward," said Richard, with a bitter energy, strangely at variance with his usual unctuous deference to the king, "your highness's gaiety is ill-seasoned; you reject all the means to assure your throne—you rejoice in all the events that imperil it. I prayed you to lose not a moment in conciliating, if possible, the great lord whom you own you have wronged, and you replied that you would rather lose your crown than win back the arm that gave it you."

"Gave it me! an error, Richard! that crown was at once the heritage of my own birth, and the achievement of my own sword. But were it as you say, it is not in a king's nature to bear the presence of a power more formidable than his own—to submit to a voice

that commands rather than counsels; and the happiest chance that ever befel me is the exile of this earl. How, after what hath chanced, can I ever see his face again without humiliation, or he mine without resentment?"

"So you told me anon, and I answered, if that be so, and your highness shrinks from the man you have injured, beware at least that Warwick, if he may not return as a friend, come not back as an irresistible foe. If you will not conciliate, crush! Hasten by all arts to separate Clarence from Warwick. Hasten to prevent the union of the earl's popularity and Henry's rights. Keep eye upon all the Lancastrian lords, and see that none quit the realm, where they are captives, to join a camp where they can rise into leaders. And at the very moment I urge you to place strict watch upon Oxford —to send your swiftest riders to seize Jasper of Pembroke, you laugh with glee to hear that Oxford and Pembroke are gone to swell the army of your foes!"

"Better foes out of my realm than in it," answered Edward, drily.

"My liege, I say no more," and Richard rose. "I would forestall a danger; it but remains for me to share it."

The king was touched. "Tarry yet, Richard," he said; and then, fixing his brother's eye, he continued, with a half-smile and a heightened colour, "Though we know thee true and leal to us, we yet know also, Richard, that thou hast personal interest in thy counsels. Thou wouldst by one means or another soften or constrain the earl into giving thee the hand of Anne. Well, then, grant that Warwick and Clarence expel King Edward from his throne, they may bring a bride to console thee for the ruin of a brother."

"Thou hast no right to taunt or to suspect me, my

liege," returned Richard, with a quiver in his lip. "Thou hast included me in thy meditated wrong to Warwick; and had that wrong been done——"

"Peradventure it had made thee espouse Warwick's quarrel?"

"Bluntly, yes!" exclaimed Richard, almost fiercely, and playing with his dagger. "But" (he added, with a sudden change of voice), "I understand and know thee better than the earl did or could. I know what in thee is but thoughtless impulse, haste of passion, the habit kings form of forgetting all things save the love or hate, the desire or anger, of a moment. Thou hast told me thyself, and with tears, of thy offence; thou hast pardoned my boy's burst of anger; I have pardoned thy evil thought; thou hast told me thyself, that another face has succeeded to the brief empire of Anne's blue eye, and hast further pledged me thy kingly word, that if I can yet compass the hand of a cousin, dear to me from childhood, thou wilt confirm the union."

"It is true," said Edward. "But if thou wed thy bride, keep her aloof from the court—nay, frown not, my boy, I mean simply that I would not blush before my brother's wife!"

Richard bowed low in order to conceal the expression of his face, and went on without further notice of the explanation.

"And all this considered, Edward, I swear, by St. Paul, the holiest saint to thoughtful men, and by St. George, the noblest patron to high-born warriors, that thy crown and thine honour are as dear to me as if they were mine own. Whatever sins Richard of Gloucester may live to harbour and repent, no man shall ever say of him that he was a recreant to the honour of his coun-

try,* or slow to defend the rights of his ancestors from the treason of a vassal or the sword of a foreign foe. Therefore, I say again, if thou reject my honest counsels—if thou suffer Warwick to unite with Lancaster and France—if the ships of Louis bear to your shores an enemy, the might of whom your reckless daring undervalues, foremost in the field in battle, nearest to your side in exile, shall Richard Plantagenet be found!"

These words, being uttered with sincerity, and conveying a promise never forfeited, were more impressive than the subtlest eloquence the wily and accomplished Gloucester ever employed as the cloak to guile, and they so affected Edward, that he threw his arms around his brother; and after one of those bursts of emotion which were frequent in one whose feelings were never deep and lasting, but easily aroused and warmly spoken, he declared himself ready to listen to and adopt all means which Richard's art could suggest for the better maintenance of their common weal and interests.

And then, with that wondrous, if somewhat too restless and over-refining energy which belonged to him, Richard rapidly detailed the scheme of his profound and dissimulating policy. His keen and intuitive insight into human nature had shown him the stern necessity which, against their very will, must unite Warwick with Margaret of Anjou. His conversation with Montagu had left no doubt of that peril on his penetrating mind. He foresaw that this union might be made durable and sacred by the marriage of Anne

* So Lord Bacon observes of Richard, with that discrimination, even in the strongest censure, of which profound judges of mankind are alone capable, that he was "a king jealous of the honour of the English nation."

and Prince Edward; and to defeat this alliance was his first object, partly through Clarence, partly through Margaret herself. A gentlewoman in the Duchess of Clarence's train had been arrested on the point of embarking to join her mistress. Richard had already seen and conferred with this lady, whose ambition, duplicity, and talent for intrigue, were known to him. Having secured her by promises of the most lavish dignities and rewards, he proposed that she should be permitted to join the duchess with secret messages to Isabel and the duke, warning them both that Warwick and Margaret would forget their past feud in present sympathy, and that the rebellion against King Edward, instead of placing them on the throne, would humble them to be subordinates and aliens to the real profiters —the Lancastrians.* He foresaw what effect these warnings would have upon the vain duke and the ambitious Isabel, whose character was known to him from childhood. He startled the king by insisting upon sending, at the same time, a trusty diplomatist to Margaret of Anjou, proffering to give the Princess Elizabeth (betrothed to Lord Montagu's son) to the young Prince Edward.† Thus, if the king, who had, as yet, no son, were to die, Margaret's son, in right of his wife, as well as in that of his own descent, would peaceably ascend the throne. "Need I say that I mean not this in sad and serious earnest," observed Richard, interrupting the astonished king—"I mean it but to amuse the Anjouite, and to deafen her ears to any overtures from Warwick. If she listen, we gain time—that time will inevitably renew irreconcilable quarrel between herself and the earl. His hot temper and desire

* Comines, 3, c. 5; Hall; Hollinshed.
† "Original Letters from Harleian MSS."—Edited by Sir H. Ellis (Second Series).

of revenge will not brook delay. He will land, unsupported by Margaret and her partisans, and without any fixed principle of action which can strengthen force by opinion."

"You are right, Richard," said Edward, whose faithless cunning comprehended the more sagacious policy it could not originate. "All be it as you will."

"And in the meanwhile," added Richard, "watch well, but anger not, Montagu and the archbishop. It were dangerous to seem to distrust them till proof be clear—it were dull to believe them true. I go at once to fulfil my task."

CHAPTER VII

WARWICK AND HIS FAMILY IN EXILE

We now summon the reader on a longer if less classic journey than from Thebes to Athens, and waft him on a rapid wing from Shene to Amboise. We must suppose that the two emissaries of Gloucester have already arrived at their several destinations—the lady has reached Isabel;—the envoy, Margaret.

In one of the apartments appropriated to the earl in the royal palace, within the embrasure of a vast Gothic casement, sat Anne of Warwick; the small wicket in the window was open, and gave a view of a wide and fair garden, interspersed with thick bosquets, and regular alleys, over which the rich skies of the summer evening, a little before sunset, cast alternate light and shadow. Towards this prospect the sweet face of the Lady Anne was turned musingly. The riveted eye—the bended neck—the arms reclining on the knee—the slender fingers interlaced—gave to her whole person the character of reverie and repose.

In the same chamber were two other ladies; the one was pacing the floor with slow but uneven steps, with lips moving from time to time, as if in self-commune, with the brow contracted slightly: her form and face took also the character of reverie, but not of repose.

The third female (the gentle and lovely mother of the other two) was seated, towards the centre of the room, before a small table, on which rested one of those religious manuscripts, full of the moralities and the marvels of cloister sanctity, which made so large a portion of the literature of the monkish ages. But her eye rested not on the Gothic letter, and the rich blazon of the holy book. With all a mother's fear, and all a mother's fondness, it glanced from Isabel to Anne—from Anne to Isabel, till at length in one of those soft voices, so rarely heard, which makes even a stranger love the speaker, the fair countess said—

"Come hither, my child, Isabel, give me thy hand, and whisper me what hath chafed thee."

"My mother," replied the duchess, "it would become me ill to have a secret not known to thee, and yet, methinks, it would become me less to say aught to provoke thine anger!"

"Anger, Isabel! who ever knew anger for those they love?"

"Pardon me, my sweet mother," said Isabel, relaxing her haughty brow, and she approached and kissed her mother's cheek.

The countess drew her gently to a seat by her side—

"And now tell me all—unless, indeed, thy Clarence hath, in some lover's hasty mood, vexed thy affection; for of the household secrets, even a mother should not question the true wife."

Isabel paused, and glanced significantly at Anne.

"Nay—see!" said the countess, smiling, though sadly—"*She,* too, hath thoughts that she will not tell to me; but they seem not such as should alarm my fears as thine do. For the moment ere I spoke to thee, *thy* brow frowned, and *her* lip smiled. She hears us not —speak on."

"Is it then true, my mother, that Margaret of Anjou is hastening hither; and can it be possible that King Louis can persuade my lord and father to meet, save in the field of battle, the arch-enemy of our house?"

"Ask the earl thyself, Isabel; Lord Warwick hath no concealment from his children. Whatever he doth is ever wisest, best, and knightliest—so, at least, may his children always deem!"

Isabel's colour changed, and her eye flashed. But ere she could answer, the arras was raised, and Lord Warwick entered. But no longer did the hero's mien and manner evince that cordial and tender cheerfulness which, in all the storms of his changeful life, he had hitherto displayed when coming from power and danger, from council or from camp, to man's earthly paradise—a virtuous home.

Gloomy and absorbed his very dress—which, at that day, the Anglo-Norman deemed it a sin against self-dignity to neglect—betraying, by its disorder, that thorough change of the whole mind; that terrible internal revolution, which is made but, in strong natures, by the tyranny of a great care, or a great passion, the earl scarcely seemed to heed his countess, who rose hastily, but stopped in the timid fear and reverence of love at the sight of his stern aspect,—he threw himself abruptly on a seat, passed his hand over his face, and sighed heavily.

That sigh dispelled the fear of the wife, and made

her alive only to her privilege of the soother. She drew near, and placing herself on the green rushes at his feet, took his hand and kissed it, but did not speak.

The earl's eyes fell on the lovely face looking up to him through tears, his brow softened, he drew his hand gently from hers, placed it on her head, and said, in a low voice—

"God and Our Lady bless thee, sweet wife!"

Then, looking round, he saw Isabel watching him intently, and, rising at once, he threw his arm round her waist, pressed her to his bosom, and said, "My daughter, for thee and thine, day and night have I striven and planned in vain. I cannot reward thy husband as I would—I cannot give thee, as I had hoped, a throne!"

"What title so dear to Isabel," said the countess, "as that of Lord Warwick's daughter?"

Isabel remained cold and silent, and returned not the earl's embrace.

Warwick was, happily, too absorbed in his own feelings to notice those of his child. Moving away, he continued, as he paced the room (his habit in emotion, which Isabel, who had many minute external traits, in common with her father, had unconsciously caught from him)—

"Till this morning, I hoped still that my name and services, that Clarence's popular bearing, and his birth of Plantagenet, would suffice to summon the English people round our standard—that the false Edward would be driven, on our landing, to fly the realm; and that, without change to the dynasty of York, Clarence, as next male heir, would ascend the throne. True, I saw all the obstacles—all the difficulties,—I was warned of them before I left England; but still I

hoped. Lord Oxford has arrived—he has just left me. We have gone over the chart of the way before us, weighed the worth of every name, for and against; and, alas! I cannot but allow that all attempt to place the younger brother on the throne of the elder would but lead to bootless slaughter, and irretrievable defeat."

"Wherefore think you so, my lord?" asked Isabel, in evident excitement. "Your own retainers are sixty thousand; an army larger than Edward, and all his lords of yesterday, can bring into the field."

"My child," answered the earl, with that profound knowledge of his countrymen which he had rather acquired from his English heart, than from any subtlety of intellect—"armies may gain a victory, but they do not achieve a throne—unless, at least, they enforce a slavery; and it is not for me and for Clarence to be the violent conquerors of our countrymen, but the regenerators of a free realm, corrupted by a false man's rule."

"And what then," exclaimed Isabel,—"what do you propose, my father? Can it be possible that you can unite yourself with the abhorred Lancastrians—with the savage Anjouite, who beheaded my grandsire, Salisbury? Well do I remember your own words —'May God and St. George forget me, when I forget those grey and gory hairs!'"

Here Isabel was interrupted by a faint cry from Anne, who, unobserved by the rest, and, hitherto concealed from her father's eye by the deep embrasure of the window, had risen some moments before, and listened, with breathless attention, to the conversation between Warwick and the duchess.

"It is not true—it is not true!" exclaimed Anne, passionately. "Margaret disowns the inhuman deed."

"Thou art right, Anne," said Warwick; "though I guess not how thou didst learn the error of a report so popularly believed, that till of late, I never questioned its truth. King Louis assures me solemnly, that that foul act was done by the butcher Clifford, against Margaret's knowledge, and, when known, to her grief and anger."

"And you, who call Edward false, can believe Louis true!"

"Cease, Isabel—cease!" said the countess. "Is it thus my child can address my lord and husband? Forgive her, beloved Richard."

"Such heat in Clarence's wife misbeseems her not," answered Warwick. "And I can comprehend and pardon in my haughty Isabel a resentment which her reason must, at last, subdue; for think not, Isabel, that it is without dread struggle and fierce agony that I can contemplate peace and league with mine ancient foe; but here two duties speak to me in voices not to be denied: my honour and my hearth, as noble and as man, demand redress—and the weal and glory of my country demand a ruler who does not degrade a warrior, nor assail a virgin, nor corrupt a people by lewd pleasures, nor exhaust a land by grinding imposts; and that honour shall be vindicated, and that country shall be righted, no matter at what sacrifice of private grief and pride."

The words and the tone of the earl for a moment awed even Isabel, but after a pause, she said, sullenly, "And for this, then, Clarence hath joined your quarrel, and shared your exile!—for this,—that he may place the eternal barrier of the Lancastrian line between himself and the English throne!"

"I would fain hope," answered the earl, calmly,

" that Clarence will view our hard position more charitably than thou. If he gain not all that I could desire, should success crown our arms, he will, at least, gain much; for often and ever did thy husband, Isabel, urge me to stern measures against Edward, when I soothed him and restrained. *Mort Dieu!* how often did he complain of slight and insult from Elizabeth and her minions, of open affront from Edward, of parsimony to his wants as prince—of a life, in short, humbled and made bitter by all the indignity and the gall which scornful power can inflict on dependent pride. If he gain not the throne, he will gain, at least, the succession, in thy right to the baronies of Beauchamp, the mighty duchy and the vast heritage of York, the viceroyalty of Ireland. Never prince of the blood had wealth and honours equal to those that shall await thy lord. For the rest, I drew him not into my quarrel—long before, would he have drawn me into his; nor doth it become thee, Isabel, as child and as sister, to repent, if the husband of my daughter felt as brave men feel, without calculation of gain and profit, the insult offered to his lady's house. But, if here I overgauge his chivalry and love to me and mine, or discontent his ambition and his hopes, *Mort Dieu!* we hold him not a captive. Edward will hail his overtures of peace; let him make terms with his brother, and return."

" I will report to him what you say, my lord," said Isabel, with cold brevity; and, bending her haughty head in formal reverence, she advanced to the door. Anne sprang forward and caught her hand.

" Oh, Isabel!" she whispered; " in our father's sad and gloomy hour can you leave him thus?"—and the sweet lady burst into tears.

"Anne," retorted Isabel, bitterly, "thy heart is Lancastrian; and what, peradventure, grieves my father, hath but joy for thee."

Anne drew back, pale and trembling, and her sister swept from the room.

The earl, though he had not overheard the whispered sentences which passed between his daughters, had watched them closely, and his lip quivered with emotion, as Isabel closed the door.

"Come hither, my Anne," he said, tenderly; "thou who hast thy mother's face, never hast a harsh thought for thy father."

As Anne threw herself on Warwick's breast, he continued—"And how camest thou to learn that Margaret disowns a deed that, if done by her command, would render my union with her cause a sacrilegious impiety to the dead?"

Anne coloured, and nestled her head still closer to her father's bosom. Her mother regarded her confusion and her silence with an anxious eye.

The wing of the palace in which the earl's apartments were situated was appropriated to himself and household, flanked to the left by an abutting pile containing state-chambers, never used by the austere and thrifty Louis, save on great occasions of pomp or revel; and, as we have before observed, looking on a garden,—which was generally solitary and deserted. From this garden, while Anne yet strove for words to answer her father, and the countess yet watched her embarrassment, suddenly came the soft strain of a Provençal lute; while a low voice, rich, and modulated at once by a deep feeling and an exquisite art that would have given effect to even simpler words, breathed

THE LAY OF THE HEIR OF LANCASTER

"His birthright but a Father's name,
A Grandsire's hero-sword;
He dwelt within the Stranger's land,
The friendless, homeless Lord!

"Yet one dear hope, too dear to tell,
Consoled the exiled man;
The Angels have their home in Heaven
And gentle thoughts in Anne."

At that name the voice of the singer trembled, and paused a moment; the earl, who at first had scarcely listened to what he deemed but the ill-seasoned gallantry of one of the royal minstrels, started in proud surprise, and Anne herself, tightening her clasp round her father's neck, burst into passionate sobs. The eye of the countess met that of her lord, but she put her finger to her lips in sign to him to listen. The song was resumed—

"Recall the single sunny time,
In childhood's April weather,
When he and thou, the boy and girl;—
Roved, hand in hand, together;—

"When round thy young companion knelt
The Princes of the Isle;—
And Priest and People pray'd their God,
On England's Heir to smile."

The earl uttered a half-stifled exclamation, but the minstrel heard not the interruption, and continued—

"Methinks the sun hath never smil'd
Upon the exiled man,
Like that bright morning when the boy
Told all his soul to Anne.

"No; while his birthright but a name,
A Grandsire's hero-sword,
He would not woo the lofty maid
To love the banish'd lord.

"But when, with clarion, fife, and drum,
He claims and wins his own;
When o'er the Deluge drifts his Ark,
To rest upon a throne—

"THEN, wilt thou deign to hear the hope
That bless'd the exiled man,
When pining for his Father's crown
To deck the brows of Anne!"

The song ceased, and there was silence within the chamber, broken but by Anne's low, yet passionate weeping. The earl gently strove to disengage her arms from his neck, but she, mistaking his intention, sank on her knees, and covering her face with her hands, exclaimed—

"Pardon!—pardon!—pardon him, if not me!"

"What have I to pardon? What hast thou concealed from me? Can I think that thou hast met, *in secret,* one who——"

"In secret! Never—never, father! This is the third time only that I have heard his voice since we have been at Amboise, save when—save when——"

"Go on."

"Save when King Louis presented him to me in the revel, under the name of the Count de F——, and he asked me if I could forgive his mother for Lord Clifford's crime."

"It is, then, as the rhyme proclaimed; and it is Edward of Lancaster who loves and woos the daughter of Lord Warwick!"

Something in her father's voice made Anne remove

her hands from her face, and look up to him with a thrill of timid joy. Upon his brow, indeed, frowned no anger—upon his lip smiled no scorn. At that moment all his haughty grief at the curse of circumstance, which drove him to his hereditary foe, had vanished. Though Montagu had obtained from Oxford some glimpse of the desire which the more sagacious and temperate Lancastrians already entertained for that alliance, and though Louis had already hinted its expediency to the earl, yet, till now, Warwick himself had naturally conceived that the prince shared the enmity of his mother, and that such an union, however politic, was impossible; but now, indeed, there burst upon him the full triumph of revenge and pride. Edward of York dared to woo Anne to dishonour—Edward of Lancaster dared not even woo her as his wife till his crown was won! To place upon the throne the very daughter the ungrateful monarch had insulted—to make her he would have humbled not only the instrument of his fall, but the successor of his purple—to unite in one glorious strife, the wrongs of the man and the pride of the father,—these were the thoughts that sparkled in the eye of the king-maker, and flushed with a fierce rapture the dark cheek, already hollowed by passion and care. He raised his daughter from the floor, and placed her in her mother's arms, but still spoke not.

"This, then, was thy secret, Anne," whispered the countess, "and I half foreguessed it, when, last night, I knelt beside thy couch to pray, and overheard thee murmur in thy dreams."

"Sweet mother, thou forgivest me; but my father—ah, he speaks not!—One word! Father, father, not even *his* love could console me if I angered *thee!*"

The earl, who had remained rooted to the spot, his eyes shining thoughtfully under his dark brows, and his hand slightly raised, as if piercing into the future, and mapping out its airy realm, turned quickly—

"I go to the heir of Lancaster; if this boy be bold and true—worthy of England and of thee—we will change the sad ditty of that scrannel lute into such a storm of trumpets as beseems the triumph of a conqueror, and the marriage of a prince!"

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE HEIR OF LANCASTER MEETS THE KING-MAKER

In truth, the young prince, in obedience to a secret message from the artful Louis, had repaired to the court of Amboise under the name of the Count de F——. The French king had long before made himself acquainted with Prince Edward's romantic attachment to the earl's daughter, through the agent employed by Edward to transmit his portrait to Anne at Rouen; and from him, probably, came to Oxford the suggestion which that nobleman had hazarded to Montagu; and now that it became his policy seriously and earnestly to espouse the cause of his kinswoman Margaret, he saw all the advantage to his cold statecraft, which could be drawn from a boyish love. Louis had a well-founded fear of the warlike spirit and military talents of Edward IV.; and this fear had induced him hitherto to refrain from openly espousing the cause of the Lancastrians, though it did not prevent his abetting such seditions and intrigues as could confine the atten-

tion of the martial Plantagenet to the perils of his own realm. But now that the breach between Warwick and the king had taken place—now that the earl could no longer curb the desire of the Yorkist monarch to advance his hereditary claims to the fairest provinces of France—nay, peradventure, to France itself,—while the defection of Lord Warwick gave to the Lancastrians the first fair hope of success in urging their own pretensions to the English throne—he bent all the powers of his intellect and his will towards the restoration of a natural ally, and the downfall of a dangerous foe. But he knew that Margaret and her Lancastrian favourers could not of themselves suffice to achieve a revolution—that they could only succeed under cover of the popularity and the power of Warwick, while he perceived all the art it would require to make Margaret forego her vindictive nature and long resentment, and to supple the pride of the great earl into recognising, as a sovereign, the woman who had branded him as a traitor.

Long before Lord Oxford's arrival, Louis, with all that address which belonged to him, had gradually prepared the earl to familiarise himself to the only alternative before him, save that, indeed, of powerless sense of wrong, and obscure and lasting exile. The French king looked with more uneasiness to the scruples of Margaret; and to remove these, he trusted less to his own skill, than to her love for her only son.

His youth passed principally in Anjou—that court of minstrels—young Edward's gallant and ardent temper had become deeply imbued with the southern poetry and romance. Perhaps, the very feud between his house and Lord Warwick's, though both claimed their common descent from John of Gaunt, had tended,

by the contradictions in the human heart, to endear to him the recollection of the gentle Anne. He obeyed with joy the summons of Louis, repaired to the court, was presented to Anne as the Count de F——, found himself recognised at the first glance (for his portrait still lay upon her heart, as his remembrance in its core), and, twice before the song we have recited, had ventured, agreeably to the sweet customs of Anjou, to address the lady of his love, under the shade of the starlit and summer copses. But, on this last occasion, he had departed from his former discretion; hitherto he had selected an hour of deeper night, and ventured but beneath the lattice of the maiden's chamber when the rest of the palace was hushed in sleep. And the fearless declaration of his rank and love now hazarded, was prompted by one who contrived to turn to grave uses the wildest whim of the minstrel, the most romantic enthusiasm of youth.

Louis had just learned from Oxford the result of his interview with Warwick. And about the same time the French king had received a letter from Margaret, announcing her departure from the castle of Verdun for Tours, where she prayed him to meet her forthwith, and stating that she had received from England tidings that might change all her schemes, and more than ever forbid the possibility of a reconciliation with the Earl of Warwick.

The king perceived the necessity of calling into immediate effect the aid on which he had relied, in the presence and passion of the young prince. He sought him at once—he found him in a remote part of the gardens, and overheard him breathing to himself the lay he had just composed.

"*Pasque Dieu?*" said the king, laying his hand on

the young man's shoulder—"if thou wilt but repeat that song where and when I bid thee, I promise that before the month ends Lord Warwick shall pledge thee his daughter's hand; and before the year is closed thou shalt sit beside Lord Warwick's daughter in the halls of Westminster."

And the royal troubadour took the counsel of the king.

The song had ceased; the minstrel emerged from the bosquets, and stood upon the sward, as, from the postern of the palace, walked with a slow step, a form from which it became him not, as prince or as lover, in peace or in war, to shrink. The first stars had now risen; the light, though serene, was pale and dim. The two men—the one advancing, the other motionless—gazed on each other in grave silence. As Count de F——, amidst the young nobles in the king's train, the earl had scarcely noticed the heir of England. He viewed him now with a different eye:—in secret complacency, for, with a soldier's weakness, the soldier-baron valued men too much for their outward seeming,—he surveyed a figure already masculine and stalwart, though still in the graceful symmetry of fair eighteen.

"A youth of a goodly presence," muttered the earl, "with the dignity that commands in peace, and the sinews that can strive against hardship and death in war."

He approached, and said, calmly—"Sir minstrel, he who woos either fame or beauty may love the lute, but should wield the sword. At least, so methinks, had the Fifth Henry said to him who boasts for his heritage the sword of Agincourt."

"O noble earl!" exclaimed the prince, touched by

words far gentler than he had dared to hope, despite his bold and steadfast mien, and giving way to frank and graceful emotion—"O noble earl! since thou knowest me—since my secret is told—since, in that secret, I have proclaimed a hope as dear to me as a crown, and dearer far than life, can I hope that thy rebuke but veils thy favour, and that, under Lord Warwick's eye, the grandson of Henry V. shall approve himself worthy of the blood that kindles in his veins?"

"Fair sir and prince," returned the earl, whose hardy and generous nature the emotion and fire of Edward warmed and charmed, "there are, alas! deep memories of blood and wrong—the sad deeds and wrathful words of party feud and civil war, between thy royal mother and myself; and though we may unite now against a common foe, much I fear that the Lady Margaret would brook ill a closer friendship, a nearer tie, than the exigency of the hour, between Richard Nevile and her son."

"No, sir earl; let me hope you misthink her. Hot and impetuous, but not mean and treacherous, the moment that she accepts the service of thine arm she must forget that thou hast been her foe; and if I, as my father's heir, return to England, it is in the trust that a new era will commence. Free from the passionate enmities of either faction, Yorkist and Lancastrian are but Englishmen to me. Justice to all who serve us—pardon for all who have opposed."

The prince paused, and, even in the dim light, his kingly aspect gave effect to his kingly words. "And if this resolve be such as you approve—if you, great earl, be that which even your foes proclaim, a man whose power depends less on lands and vassals—

broad though the one, and numerous though the other —than on well-known love for England, her glory, and her peace, it rests with you to bury for ever in one grave the feuds of Lancaster and York! What Yorkist, who hath fought at Touton or St. Albans, under Lord Warwick's standard, will lift sword against the husband of Lord Warwick's daughter? what Lancastrian will not forgive a Yorkist, when Lord Warwick, the kinsman of Duke Richard, becomes father to the Lancastrian heir, and bulwark to the Lancastrian throne? Oh, Warwick, if not for my sake, nor for the sake of full redress against the ingrate whom thou repentest to have placed on my father's throne, at least for the sake of England—for the healing of her bleeding wounds—for the union of her divided people, hear the grandson of Henry V., who sues to thee for thy daughter's hand!"

The royal wooer bent his knee as he spoke—the mighty subject saw and prevented the impulse of the prince who had forgotten himself in the lover; the hand which he caught he lifted to his lips, and the next moment, in manly and soldierlike embrace, the prince's young arm was thrown over the broad shoulder of the king-maker.

CHAPTER IX

THE INTERVIEW OF EARL WARWICK AND QUEEN MARGARET

Louis hastened to meet Margaret at Tours; thither came also, her father René, her brother John of Calabria, Yolante her sister, and the Count of Vaudemonte. The meeting between the queen and René was so touching as to have drawn tears to the hard eyes of Louis XI.; but, that emotion over, Margaret evinced how little affliction had humbled her high spirit, or softened her angry passions: she interrupted Louis in every argument for reconciliation with Warwick. "Not with honour to myself, and to my son," she exclaimed, "can I pardon that cruel earl—the main cause of King Henry's downfall! in vain patch up a hollow peace between us—a peace of form and parchment! My spirit never can be contented with him, *ne* pardon!"

For several days she maintained a language which betrayed the chief cause of her own impolitic passions, that had lost her crown. Showing to Louis the letter despatched to her, proffering the hand of the Lady Elizabeth to her son, she asked "if that were not a more profitable party," * and, "if it were necessary that she should forgive—whether it were not more queenly to treat with Edward than with a twofold rebel?"

In fact, the queen would, perhaps, have fallen into Gloucester's artful snare, despite all the arguments and

* See, for this curious passage of secret history, Sir H. Ellis's "Original Letters from the Harleian MSS.," second series, vol. i., letter 42.

even the half-menaces * of the more penetrating Louis, but for a counteracting influence which Richard had not reckoned upon. Prince Edward, who had lingered behind Louis, arrived from Amboise, and his persuasions did more than all the representations of the crafty king. The queen loved her son with that intenseness which characterises the one soft affection of violent natures. Never had she yet opposed his most childish whim, and now he spoke with the eloquence of one, who put his heart and his life's life into his words. At last, reluctantly, she consented to an interview with Warwick. The earl, accompanied by Oxford, arrived at Tours, and the two nobles were led into the presence of Margaret by King Louis.

The reader will picture to himself a room darkened by thick curtains drawn across the casement, for the proud woman wished not the earl to detect on her face either the ravages of years, or the emotions of offended pride. In a throne chair, placed on the dais, sate the motionless queen, her hands clasping, convulsively, the arms of the fauteuil, her features pale and rigid;—and behind the chair leant the graceful figure of her son. The person of the Lancastrian prince was little less remarkable than that of his hostile namesake, but its character was distinctly different.† Spare, like

* Louis would have thrown over Margaret's cause, if Warwick had demanded it; he instructed MM. de Concressault and Du Plessis to assure the earl that he would aid him to the utmost to reconquer England either for the Queen Margaret or for any one else he chose (ou pour qui il voudra): for that he loved the earl better than Margaret or her son.—*Brante*, t. ix., 276.

† "According to some of the French chroniclers, the Prince of Wales, who was one of the handsomest and most accomplished princes in Europe, was very desirous of becoming the husband of Anne Nevile," &c.—Miss Strickland, "Life of Margaret of Anjou."

Henry V., almost to the manly defect of leanness, his proportions were slight to those which gave such portly majesty to the vast-chested Edward, but they evinced the promise of almost equal strength; the muscles hardened to iron by early exercise in arms, the sap of youth never wasted by riot and debauch: his short purple manteline trimmed with ermine, was embroidered with his grandfather's favourite device, "the silver swan"—he wore on his breast the badge of St. George, and the single ostrich plume, which made his cognisance as Prince of Wales, waved over a fair and ample forehead, on which were, even then, traced the lines of musing thought and high design; his chestnut hair curled close to his noble head, his eye shone dark and brilliant beneath the deep-set brow, which gives to the human countenance such expression of energy and intellect—all about him, in aspect and mien, seemed to betoken a mind riper than his years, a masculine simplicity of taste and bearing, the earnest and grave temperament, mostly allied, in youth, to pure and elevated desires, to an honourable and chivalric soul.

Below the dais stood some of the tried and gallant gentlemen who had braved exile, and tasted penury in their devotion to the House of Lancaster, and who had now flocked once more round their queen, in the hope of better days. There, were the Dukes of Exeter and Somerset—their very garments soiled and threadbare—many a day had those great lords hungered for the beggar's crust!* There, stood Sir John Fortescue, the patriarch authority of our laws, who had composed his famous treatise for the benefit of the young prince, overfond of exercise with lance and brand, and

* Philip de Comines says he himself had seen the Dukes of Exeter and Somerset in the Low Countries in as wretched a plight as common beggars.

the recreation of knightly song. There, were Jasper of Pembroke, and Sir Henry Rous, and the Earl of Devon, and the Knight of Lytton, whose house had followed, from sire to son, the fortunes of the Lancastrian Rose;* and, contrasting the sober garments of the exiles, shone the jewels and cloth of gold that decked the persons of the more prosperous foreigners, Ferri, Count of Vaudemonte, Margaret's brother, the Duke of Calabria, and the powerful form of Sir Pierre de Brezé, who had accompanied Margaret in her last disastrous campaigns, with all the devotion of a chevalier for the lofty lady adored in secret.†

When the door opened, and gave to the eyes of those proud exiles the form of their puissant enemy, they with difficulty suppressed the murmur of their resentment, and their looks turned with sympathy and grief to the hueless face of their queen.

The earl himself was troubled—his step was less firm, his crest less haughty, his eye less serenely steadfast.

But beside him, in a dress more homely than that of the poorest exile there, and in garb and in aspect, as he lives for ever in the portraiture of Victor Hugo

* Sir Robert de Lytton (whose grandfather had been Comptroller to the Household of Henry IV., and Agister of the Forests allotted to Queen Joan), was one of the most powerful knights of the time; and afterwards, according to Perkin Warbeck, one of the ministers most trusted by Henry VII. He was lord of Lytton, in Derbyshire (where his ancestors had been settled since the Conquest), of Knebworth in Herts (the ancient seat and manor of Plantagenet de Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk and Earl Marshal), of Myndelesden and Langley, of Standyarn, Dene, and Brekesborne, in Northamptonshire, and became in the reign of Henry VII., Privy Councillor, Under-Treasurer, and Keeper of the great Wardrobe.

† See for the chivalrous devotion of this knight (Seneschal of Normandy) to Margaret—Miss Strickland's Life of that queen.

and our own yet greater Scott, moved Louis, popularly called "The Fell."

"Madame and cousin," said the king, "we present to you the man for whose haute courage and dread fame we have such love and respect, that we value him as much as any king, and would do as much for him as for man living,* and with my lord of Warwick, see also this noble Earl of Oxford, who, though he may have sided awhile with the enemies of your highness, comes now to pray your pardon, and to lay at your feet his sword."

Lord Oxford (who had ever unwillingly acquiesced in the Yorkist dynasty)—more prompt than Warwick, here threw himself on his knees before Margaret, and his tears fell on her hand, as he murmured "Pardon."

"Rise, Sir John de Vere," said the queen, glancing, with a flashing eye, from Oxford to Lord Warwick. "Your pardon is right easy to purchase, for well I know that you yielded but to the time—you did not turn the time against us—you and yours have suffered much for King Henry's cause. Rise, Sir Earl."

"And," said a voice, so deep and so solemn, that it hushed the very breath of those who heard it,—"and has Margaret a pardon also for the man who did more than all others to dethrone King Henry, and can do more than all to restore his crown?"

"Ha!" cried Margaret, rising in her passion, and casting from her the hand her son had placed upon her shoulder—"Ha! Ownest thou thy wrongs, proud lord? Comest thou at last to kneel at Queen Margaret's feet? Look round and behold her court—some half-score brave and unhappy gentlemen, driven from their hearths and homes—their heritage the prey

* Ellis's "Original Letters," vol. i., letter 42, second series.

of knaves and varlets—their sovereign in a prison—their sovereign's wife, their sovereign's son, persecuted and hunted from the soil! And comest thou now to the forlorn majesty of sorrow to boast—'Such deeds were mine?'"

"Mother and lady," began the prince—

"Madden me not, my son. Forgiveness is for the prosperous, not for adversity and woe."

"Hear me," said the earl,—who, having once bowed his pride to the interview, had steeled himself against the passion which, in his heart, he somewhat despised as a mere woman's burst of inconsiderate fury—"for I have this right to be heard—that not one of these knights, your lealest and noblest friends, can say of me, that I ever stooped to gloss mine acts, or palliate bold deeds with wily words. Dear to me as comrade in arms—sacred to me as a father's head, was Richard of York, mine uncle by marriage with Lord Salisbury's sister. I speak not now of his claims by descent (for those even King Henry could not deny), but I maintain them, even in your grace's presence, to be such as vindicate, from disloyalty and treason, me and the many true and gallant men who upheld them through danger, by field and scaffold. Error, it might be—but the error of men who believed themselves the defenders of a just cause. Nor did I, Queen Margaret, lend myself wholly to my kinsman's quarrel, nor share one scheme that went to the dethronement of King Henry, until—pardon, if I speak bluntly; it is my wont, and would be more so now, but for thy fair face and woman's form, which awe me more than if confronting the frown of Cœur de Lion, or the First Great Edward—pardon me, I say, if I speak bluntly, and aver, that I was not King Henry's foe until false counsellors had

planned my destruction, in body and goods, land and life. In the midst of peace, at Coventry, my father and myself scarcely escaped the knife of the murderer.* In the streets of London, the very menials and hangmen employed in the service of your highness beset me unarmed,† a little time after, and my name was attainted by an illegal Parliament.‡ And not till after these things did Richard Duke of York ride to the Hall of Westminster, and lay his hand upon the throne; nor till after these things did I and my father Salisbury say to each other, 'The time has come when neither peace nor honour can be found for us under King Henry's reign.' Blame me if you will, Queen Margaret; reject me, if you need not my sword; but that which I did in the gone days was such as no nobleman so outraged and *despaired*,§ would have forborne to do;—remembering that England is not the heritage of the king alone, but that safety and honour, and freedom and justice, are the *rights* of his Norman gentlemen and his Saxon people. And rights are a mockery and a laughter if they do not justify resistance, whensoever, and by whomsoever, they are invaded and assailed."

It had been with a violent effort that Margaret had refrained from interrupting this address, which had, however, produced no inconsiderable effect upon the knightly listeners around the dais. And now, as the earl ceased, her indignation was arrested by dismay on seeing the young prince suddenly leave his post and advance to the side of Warwick.

* See Hall (236), who says that Margaret had laid a snare for Salisbury and Warwick, at Warwick, and "if they had not suddenly departed, their life's thread had been broken."

† Hall, Fabyan. ‡ "Parl. Rolls," 370; W. Wyr. 478.

§ Warwick's phrase:—See Sir H. Ellis's "Original Letters," vol. i., second series.

"Right well hast thou spoken, noble earl and cousin —right well, though right plainly. And I," added the prince, "saving the presence of my queen and mother —I, the representative of my sovereign father, in his name will pledge thee a king's oblivion and pardon for the past, if thou, on thy side acquit my princely mother of all privity to the snares against thy life and honour of which thou hast spoken, and give thy knightly word to be henceforth leal to Lancaster. Perish all memories of the past that can make walls between the souls of brave men."

Till this moment, his arms folded in his gown, his thin, fox-like face bent to the ground, Louis had listened, silent and undisturbed. He now deemed it the moment to second the appeal of the prince. Passing his hand hypocritically over his tearless eyes, the king turned to Margaret and said—

"Joyful hour!—happy union!—May Madame La Vierge and Monseigneur St. Martin sanctify and hallow the bond by which alone my beloved kinswoman can regain her rights and roiaulme. Amen."

Unheeding this pious ejaculation, her bosom heaving, her eyes wandering from the earl to Edward, Margaret at last gave vent to her passion.

"And is it come to this, Prince Edward of Wales, that thy mother's wrongs are not thine? Standest thou side by side with my mortal foe, who, instead of repenting treason, dares but to complain of injury? Am I fallen so low that my voice to pardon or disdain is counted but as a sough of idle air! God of my fathers, hear me! Willingly from my heart I tear the last thought and care for the pomps of earth. Hateful to me a crown for which the wearer must cringe to enemy and rebel! Away, Earl Warwick! Mon-

strous and unnatural seems it to the wife of captive Henry to see thee by the side of Henry's son!"

Every eye turned in fear to the aspect of the earl, every ear listened for the answer which might be expected from his well-known heat and pride—an answer to destroy for ever the last hope of the Lancastrian line. But whether it was the very consciousness of his power to raise or to crush that fiery speaker, or those feelings natural to brave men, half of chivalry, half contempt, which kept down the natural anger by thoughts of the *sex* and sorrows of the Anjouite, or that the wonted irascibility of his temper had melted into one steady and profound passion of revenge against Edward of York, which absorbed all lesser and more trivial causes of resentment,—the earl's face, though pale as the dead, was unmoved and calm, and, with a grave and melancholy smile, he answered—

"More do I respect thee, O queen, for the hot words which show a truth rarely heard from royal lips, than hadst thou deigned to dissimulate the forgiveness and kindly charity which sharp remembrance permits thee not to feel! No, princely Margaret, not yet can there be frank amity between thee and me! Nor do I boast the affection yon gallant gentlemen have displayed. Frankly, as thou hast spoken, do I say, that the wrongs I have suffered from another alone move me to allegiance to thyself! Let others serve thee for love of Henry—reject not my service, given but for revenge on Edward—as much, henceforth, am I his foe as formerly his friend and maker!* And if, hereafter, on the throne, thou shouldst remember and resent the former wars, at least thou hast owed me no gratitude, and thou canst not grieve my heart, and seethe my brain,

* Sir H. Ellis's "Original Letters," vol. i., second series.

as the man whom I once loved better than a son! Thus, from thy presence I depart, chafing not at thy scornful wrath—mindful, young prince, but of *thy* just and gentle heart, and sure, in the calm of my own soul (on which this much, at least, of our destiny is reflected as on a glass), that when, high lady, thy colder sense returns to thee, thou wilt see that the league between us *must* be made!—that thine ire, as woman, must fade before thy duties as a mother, thy affection as a wife, and thy paramount and solemn obligations to the people thou hast ruled as queen! In the dead of night, thou shalt hear the voice of Henry, in his prison, asking Margaret to set him free. The vision of thy son shall rise before thee in his bloom and promise, to demand, 'Why his mother deprives him of a crown?' and crowds of pale peasants, grinded beneath tyrannous exaction, and despairing fathers mourning for dishonoured children, shall ask the Christian queen, 'If God will sanction the unreasoning wrath which rejects the only instrument that can redress her people?'"

This said, the earl bowed his head and turned; but, at the first sign of his departure, there was a general movement among the noble bystanders: impressed by the dignity of his bearing, by the greatness of his power, and by the unquestionable truth that in rejecting him, Margaret cast away the heritage of her son, —the exiles, with a common impulse, threw themselves at their queen's feet, and exclaimed, almost in the same words,—

"Grace! noble queen!—Grace for the great Lord Warwick!"

"My sister," whispered John of Calabria, "thou art thy son's ruin if the earl depart!"

"*Pasque Dieu!* Vex not my kinswoman—if she prefer a convent to a throne, cross not the holy choice!" said the wily Louis, with a mocking irony on his pinched lips.

The prince alone spoke not, but stood proudly on the same spot, gazing on the earl, as he slowly moved to the door.

"Oh, Edward—Edward, my son!" exclaimed the unhappy Margaret, "if for thy sake—for thine—I must make the past a blank—speak thou for me!"

"I have spoken," said the prince, gently, "and thou didst chide me, noble mother; yet I spoke, methinks, as Henry V. had done, if of a mighty enemy he had had the power to make a noble friend."

A short convulsive sob was heard from the throne chair; and as suddenly as it burst, it ceased. Queen Margaret rose—not a trace of that stormy emotion upon the grand and marble beauty of her face. Her voice, unnaturally calm, arrested the steps of the departing earl.

"Lord Warwick, defend this boy—restore his rights—release his sainted father—and for years of anguish and of exile, Margaret of Anjou forgives the champion of her son!"

In an instant Prince Edward was again by the earl's side—a moment more, and the earl's proud knee bent in homage to the queen—joyful tears were in the eyes of her friends and kindred—a triumphant smile on the lips of Louis,—and Margaret's face, terrible in its stony and locked repose, was raised above, as if asking the All-Merciful, pardon—*for* the pardon which the human sinner had bestowed!*

* Ellis's "Original Letters from the Harleian MSS.," letter 42.

CHAPTER X

LOVE AND MARRIAGE—DOUBTS OF CONSCIENCE—DOMESTIC JEALOUSY—AND HOUSEHOLD TREASON

The events that followed this tempestuous interview were such as the position of the parties necessarily compelled. The craft of Louis—the energy and love of Prince Edward—the representations of all her kindred and friends, conquered, though not without repeated struggles, Margaret's repugnance to a nearer union between Warwick and her son. The earl did not deign to appear personally in this matter. He left it, as became him, to Louis and the prince, and finally received from them the proposals, which ratified the league, and consummated the schemes of his revenge.

Upon the Very Cross * in St. Mary's Church of Angers, Lord Warwick swore without change to hold the party of King Henry. Before the same sacred symbol, King Louis and his brother, Duke of Guienne, robed in canvas, swore to sustain to their utmost the Earl of Warwick in behalf of King Henry; and Margaret recorded her oath "to treat the earl as true and faithful, and never for deeds past to make him any reproach."

Then were signed the articles of marriage between Prince Edward and the Lady Anne—the latter to remain with Margaret, but the marriage not to be consummated "till Lord Warwick had entered England

* Miss Strickland observes upon this interview—"It does not appear that Warwick mentioned the execution of his father, the Earl of Salisbury, which is almost a confirmation of the statements of those historians who deny that he was beheaded by Margaret."

and regained the realm, or most part, for King Henry" —a condition which pleased the earl, who desired to award his beloved daughter no less a dowry than a crown.

An article far more important than all to the safety of the earl, and to the permanent success of the enterprise, was one that virtually took from the fierce and unpopular Margaret the reins of government, by constituting Prince Edward (whose qualities endeared him more and more to Warwick, and were such as promised to command the respect and love of the people) sole regent of all the realm, upon attaining his majority. For the Duke of Clarence were reserved all the lands and dignities of the duchy of York, the right to the succession of the throne to him and his posterity—failing male heirs to the Prince of Wales —with a private pledge of the vice-royalty of Ireland.

Margaret had attached to her consent one condition highly obnoxious to her high-spirited son, and to which he was only reconciled by the arguments of Warwick: she stipulated that he should not accompany the earl to England, nor appear there till his father was proclaimed king. In this, no doubt, she was guided by maternal fears and by some undeclared suspicion, either of the good faith of Warwick, or of his means to raise a sufficient army to fulfil his promise. The brave prince wished to be himself foremost in the battles fought in his right and for his cause. But the earl contended, to the surprise and joy of Margaret, that it best behoved the prince's interests to enter England without one enemy in the field, leaving others to clear his path, free himself from all the personal hate of hostile factions, and without a drop of blood upon the sword of one heralded and announced as the peace-

maker and impartial reconciler of all feuds. So then (these high conditions settled), in the presence of the Kings René and Louis, of the Earl and Countess of Warwick, and in solemn state, at Amboise, Edward of Lancaster plighted his marriage troth to his beloved and loving Anne.

It was deep night—and high revel in the Palace of Amboise crowned the ceremonies of that memorable day. The Earl of Warwick stood alone in the same chamber in which he had first discovered the secret of the young Lancastrian. From the brilliant company, assembled in the halls of state, he had stolen unperceived away, for his great heart was full to overflowing. The part he had played for many days was over, and with it the excitement and the fever. His schemes were crowned;—the Lancastrians were won to his revenge;—the king's heir was the betrothed of his favourite child;—and the hour was visible in the distance, when, by the retribution most to be desired, the father's hand should lead that child to the throne of him who would have degraded her to the dust. If victory awaited his sanguine hopes, as father to his future queen, the dignity and power of the earl became greater in the court of Lancaster than, even in his palmiest day, amidst the minions of ungrateful York; the sire of two lines—if Anne's posterity should fail, the crown would pass to the sons of Isabel,—in either case, from him (if successful in his invasion) would descend the royalty of England. Ambition, pride, revenge, might well exult in viewing the future, as mortal wisdom could discern it. The house of Nevile never seemed brightened by a more glorious star: and yet the earl was heavy and sad at heart. However he had concealed it from the eyes of others, the haughty ire of Margaret must have

galled him in his deepest soul. And even, as he had that day contemplated the holy happiness in the face of Anne, a sharp pang had shot through his breast. Were those the witnesses of fair-omened spousailles? How different from the hearty greeting of his warrior-friends, was the measured courtesy of foes, who had felt and fled before his sword? If aught chanced to him, in the hazard of the field, what thought for his child could ever speak in pity from the hard and scornful eyes of the imperious Anjouite!

The mist which till then had clouded his mind, or left visible to his gaze but one stern idea of retribution, melted into air. He beheld the fearful crisis to which his life had passed—he had reached the eminence to mourn the happy gardens left behind. Gone, for ever gone, the old endearing friendships—the sweet and manly remembrances of brave companionship and early love! Who among those who had confronted war by his side, for the house of York, would hasten to clasp his hand and hail his coming, as the captain of hated Lancaster? True, could he bow his honour to proclaim the true cause of his desertion, the heart of every father would beat in sympathy with his; but less than ever could the tale that vindicated his name be told. How stoop to invoke malignant pity to the insult offered to a future queen? Dark in his grave must rest the secret no words could syllable, save by such vague and mysterious hint and comment as pass from baseless gossip into dubious history.* True, that in his change of party he was not, like Julian of Spain, an apostate to his native land. He did not meditate the

* Hall well explains the mystery which wrapped the king's insult to a female of the House of Warwick, by the simple sentence, "the certainty was not, for both their honours, openly known!"

subversion of his country by the foreign foe, it was but the substitution of one English monarch for another—a virtuous prince for a false and a sanguinary king. True, that the change from rose to rose had been so common amongst the greatest and the bravest, that even the most rigid could scarcely censure what the age itself had sanctioned. But what other man of his stormy day had been so conspicuous in the downfall of those he was now as conspicuously to raise? What other man had Richard of York taken so dearly to his heart—to what other man had the august father said—"Protect my sons?" Before him seemed literally to rise the phantom of that honoured prince, and with clay cold lips to ask—"Art thou, of all the world, the doomsman of my first-born?" A groan escaped the breast of the self tormentor, he fell on his knees and prayed—"O, pardon, thou All-seeing!—plead for me, Divine Mother! if in this I have darkly erred, taking my *heart* for my *conscience,* and mindful only of a selfish wrong! Oh, surely, no! Had Richard of York himself lived to know what I have suffered from his unworthy son—causeless insult, broken faith, public and unabashed dishonour:—yea, pardoning, serving, loving on through all, till, at the last, nothing less than the foulest taint that can light upon 'scutcheon and name was the cold, premeditated reward for untired devotion—surely, surely, Richard himself had said—'Thy honour, at last forbids all pardon!'"

Then, in that rapidity with which the human heart, once seizing upon self-excuse, reviews, one after one, the fair apologies, the earl passed from the injury to himself to the mal-government of his land, and muttered over the thousand instances of cruelty and misrule which rose to his remembrance—forgetting, alas,

or steeling himself to the memory, that till Edward's vices had assailed his own hearth and honour, he had been contented with lamenting them,—he had not ventured to chastise. At length, calm and self-acquitted, he rose from his self-confession, and leaning by the open casement, drank in the reviving and gentle balm of the summer air. The state apartments he had left, formed, as we have before observed, an angle to the wing in which the chamber he had now retired to was placed. They were brilliantly illumined—their windows open to admit the fresh, soft breeze of night,—and he saw, as if by daylight, distinct and gorgeous, in their gay dresses, the many revellers within. But one group caught and riveted his eye. Close by the centre window he recognised his gentle Anne, with downcast looks; he almost fancied he saw her blush, as her young bridegroom, young and beautiful as herself, whispered love's flatteries in her ear. He saw farther on, but yet near, his own sweet countess, and muttered—"After twenty years of marriage, may Anne be as dear to him as *thou* art now to me!" And still he saw, or deemed he saw, his lady's eye, after resting with tender happiness on the young pair, rove wistfully around, as if missing and searching for her partner in her mother's joy. But what form sweeps by with so haughty a majesty, then pauses by the betrothed, addresses them not, but seems to regard them with so fixed a watch? He knew by her ducal diadem, by the baudekin colours of her robe, by her unmistakable air of pride, his daughter Isabel. He did not distinguish the expression of her countenance, but an ominous thrill passed through his heart; for the *attitude* itself had an expression, and not that of a sister's sympathy and love. He turned away his face

with an unquiet recollection of the altered mood of his discontented daughter. He looked again: the duchess had passed on—lost amidst the confused splendour of the revel. And high and rich swelled the merry music that invited to the stately pavon. He gazed still: his lady had left her place, the lovers, too, had vanished, and where they had stood, stood now, in close conference, his ancient enemies, Exeter and Somerset. The sudden change, from objects of love to those associated with hate, had something which touched one of those superstitions to which, in all ages, the heart, when deeply stirred, is weakly sensitive. And again, forgetful of the revel, the earl turned to the serener landscape of the grove and the moonlit green-sward, and mused and mused, till a soft arm thrown round him woke his reverie. For this had his lady left the revel. Divining, by the instinct born of love, the gloom of her husband, she had stolen from pomp and pleasure to his side.

"Ah! wherefore wouldst thou rob me," said the countess, "of one hour of thy presence, since so few hours remain—since when the sun, that succeeds the morrow's, shines upon these walls, the night of thine absence will have closed upon me?"

"And if that thought of parting, sad to me as thee, suffice not, *belle amie,* to dim the revel," answered the earl, "weetest thou not how ill the grave and solemn thoughts of one who sees before him the emprise that would change the dynasty of a realm, can suit with the careless dance and the wanton music? But, not at that moment did I think of those mightier cares; my thoughts were nearer home. Hast thou noted, sweet wife, the silent gloom, the clouded brow of Isabel, since she learned that Anne was to be the bride of the heir of Lancaster?"

The mother suppressed a sigh. "We must pardon, or glance lightly over, the mood of one who loves her lord, and mourns for his baffled hopes! Well-a-day! I grieve that she admits not even me to her confidence. Ever with the favourite lady who lately joined her train—methinks, that new friend gives less holy counsels than a mother!"

"Ha! and yet what counsels can Isabel listen to from a comparative stranger? Even if Edward, or rather his cunning Elizabeth, had suborned this waiting-woman, our daughter never could hearken, even in an hour of anger, to the message from our dishonourer and our foe."

"Nay, but a flatterer often fosters, by praising the erring thought. Isabel hath something, dear lord, of thy high heart and courage, and ever from childhood, her vaulting spirit, her very character of stately beauty, have given her a conviction of destiny and power loftier than those reserved for our gentle Anne. Let us trust to time and forbearance, and hope that the affection of the generous sister will subdue the jealousy of the disappointed princess."

"Pray Heaven, indeed, that it so prove! Isabel's ascendancy over Clarence is great, and might be dangerous. Would that she consented to remain in France with thee and Anne! Her lord, at least, it seems I have convinced and satisfied. Pleased at the vast fortunes before him, the toys of vice-regal power, his lighter nature reconciles itself to the loss of a crown, which, I fear, it could never have upheld. For the more I have read his qualities in our household intimacy, the more it seems that I could scarcely have justified the imposing on England a king not worthy of so great a people. He is young yet, but how dif-

ferent the youth of Lancastrian Edward? In *him* what earnest and manly spirit! What heaven-born views of the duties of a king! Oh, if there be a sin in the passion that hath urged me on, let me, and me alone, atone—and may I be at least the instrument to give to England a prince whose virtues shall compensate for all!"

While yet the last word trembled upon the earl's lips, a light flashed along the floors, hitherto illumined but by the stars and the full moon. And presently Isabel, in conference with the lady whom her mother had referred to, passed into the room, on her way to her private chamber. The countenance of this female diplomatist, whose talent for intrigue Philip de Comines * has commemorated, but whose name, happily for her memory, History has concealed, was soft and winning in its expression, to the ordinary glance, though the sharpness of the features, the thin compression of the lips, and the harsh dry redness of the hair, corresponded with the attributes which modern physiognomical science truly or erringly assigns to a wily and treacherous character. She bore a light in her hand, and its rays shone full on the disturbed and agitated face of the duchess. Isabel perceived at once the forms of her parents, and stopped short in some whispered conversation, and uttered a cry almost of dismay.

"Thou leavest the revel betimes, fair daughter," said the earl, examining her countenance with an eye somewhat stern.

"My lady," said the confidant, with a lowly reverence, "was anxious for her babe."

"Thy lady, good waiting-wench," said Warwick,

* Comines, iii. 5; Hall, Lingard, Hume, &c.

"needs not thy tongue to address her father. Pass on."

The gentlewoman bit her lips, but obeyed, and quitted the room. The earl approached and took Isabel's hand—it was cold as stone.

"My child," said he, tenderly, "thou dost well to retire to rest—of late thy cheek hath lost its bloom. But just now, for many causes, I was wishing thee not to brave our perilous return to England; and now, I know not whether it would make me the more uneasy, to fear for thy health if absent or thy safety if with me!"

"My lord," replied Isabel, coldly, "my duty calls me to my husband's side, and the more, since now it seems he dares the battle, but reaps not its rewards! Let Edward and Anne rest here in safety—Clarence and Isabel go to achieve the diadem and orb for others!"

"Be not bitter with thy father, girl—be not envious of thy sister!" said the earl, in grave rebuke; then softening his tone, he added, "The women of a noble house should have no ambition of their own—their glory and their honour they should leave, unmurmuring, in the hands of men! Mourn not if thy sister mounts the throne of him who would have branded the very name to which thou and she were born!"

"I have made no reproach, my lord. Forgive me, I pray you, if I now retire; I am sore weary, and would fain have strength and health not to be a burden to you when you depart."

The duchess bowed with proud submission, and moved on.

"Beware!" said the earl, in a low voice.

"Beware!—and of what?" said Isabel, startled.

"Of thine own heart, Isabel. Ay, go to thine infant's couch, ere thou seek thine own, and, before the sleep of Innocence, calm thyself back to Womanhood."

The duchess raised her head quickly, but habitual awe of her father checked the angry answer; and kissing, with formal reverence, the hand the countess extended to her, she left the room. She gained the chamber in which was the cradle of her son, gorgeously canopied with silks, inwrought with the blazoned arms of royal Clarence;—and beside the cradle sat the confidant.

The duchess drew aside the drapery, and contemplated the rosy face of the infant slumberer.

Then, turning to her confidant, she said—

"Three months since, and I hoped my firstborn would be a king! Away with those vain mockeries of royal birth! How suit they the destined vassal of the abhorred Lancastrian?"

"Sweet lady," said the confidant, "did I not warn thee from the first, that this alliance, to the injury of my lord duke and this dear boy, was already imminent? I had hoped thou mightst have prevailed with the earl!"

"He heeds me not—he cares not for me!" exclaimed Isabel; "his whole love is for Anne—Anne, who, without energy and pride, I scarcely have looked on as my equal! And now, to my younger sister, I must bow my knee—pleased if she deign to bid me hold the skirt of her queenly robe! Never—no, never!"

"Calm thyself; the courier must part this night. My Lord of Clarence is already in his chamber; he waits but thine assent to write to Edward, that he rejects not his loving messages."

The duchess walked to and fro, in great disorder.

"But to be thus secret and false to my father?"

"Doth he merit that thou shouldst sacrifice thy child to him? Reflect!—the king has no son! The English barons acknowledge not in girls a sovereign;* and, with Edward on the throne, thy son is heir-presumptive. Little chance that a male heir shall now be born to Queen Elizabeth, while from Anne and her bridegroom, a long line may spring. Besides, no matter what parchment treaties may ordain, how can Clarence and his offspring ever be regarded by a Lancastrian king but as enemies to feed the prison or the block, when some false invention gives the seemly pretext for extirpating the lawful race."

"Cease—cease—cease!" cried Isabel, in terrible struggles with herself.

"Lady, the hour presses! And, reflect, a few lines are but words, to be confirmed or retracted as occasion suits! If Lord Warwick succeed, and King Edward lose his crown, ye can shape as ye best may your conduct to the time. But if the earl lose the day—if again he be driven into exile—a few words now release you and yours from everlasting banishment; restore your boy to his natural heritage; deliver you from the insolence of the Anjouite, who, methinks, even dared this very day to taunt your highness——"

"She did—she did! Oh that my father had been by to hear! She bade me stand aside (that Anne might pass)—'not for the younger daughter of Lord Warwick, but for the lady admitted into the royalty

* Miss Strickland (Life of Elizabeth of York) remarks, "How much Norman prejudice in favour of Salic law had corrupted the common, or constitutional law of England, regarding this succession." The remark involves a controversy.

of Lancaster!' Elizabeth Woodville, at least, never dared this insolence!"

"And this Margaret, the Duke of Clarence is to place on the throne which your child yonder might otherwise aspire to mount!"

Isabel clasped her hands in mute passion.

"Hark!" said the confidant, throwing open the door.—

And along the corridor came, in measured pomp, a stately procession, the chamberlain in front, announcing "Her Highness the Princess of Wales;" and Louis XI., leading the virgin bride (wife but in name and honour, till her dowry of a kingdom was made secure) to her gentle rest. The ceremonial pomp, the regal homage that attended the younger sister thus raised above herself, completed in Isabel's jealous heart the triumph of the Tempter. Her face settled into hard resolve, and she passed at once from the chamber into one near at hand, where the Duke of Clarence sat alone, the rich wines of the livery, not untasted, before him, and the ink yet wet upon a scroll he had just indited.

He turned his irresolute countenance to Isabel as she bent over him and read the letter. It was to Edward; and after briefly warning him of the meditated invasion, significantly added—"and if I may seem to share this emprise, which, *here and alone,* I cannot resist, thou shalt find me still, when the moment comes, thy affectionate brother and loyal subject."

"Well, Isabel," said the duke, "thou knowest I have delayed this, till the last hour, to please thee; for verily, lady mine, thy will is my sweetest law. But now, if thy heart misgives thee——"

"It does—it does!" exclaimed the duchess, bursting into tears.

"If thy heart misgives thee," continued Clarence, who with all his weakness had much of the duplicity of his brothers, "why, let it pass. Slavery to scornful Margaret—vassalage to thy sister's spouse—triumph to the House which both thou and I were taught from childhood to deem accursed,—why welcome all! so that Isabel does not weep, and our boy reproach us not in the days to come!"

For an answer, Isabel, who had seized the letter, let it drop on the table, pushed it, with averted face, towards the duke, and turned back to the cradle of her child, whom she woke with her sobs, and who wailed its shrill reply in infant petulance and terror,—snatched from its slumber to the arms of the remorseful mother.

A smile of half contemptuous joy passed over the thin lips of the she-Judas, and, without speaking, she took her way to Clarence. He had sealed and bound his letter, first adding these words—"My lady and duchess, whatever her kin, has seen this letter, and approves it, for she is more a friend to York than to the earl, now he has turned Lancastrian;" and placed it in a small iron coffer.

He gave the coffer curiously clasped and locked, to the gentlewoman, with a significant glance—"Be quick, or she repents! The courier waits!—his steed saddled! The instant you give it, he departs—he hath his permit to pass the gates."

"All is prepared; ere the clock strike, he is on his way."

The confidant vanished—the duke sank in his chair, and rubbed his hands.

"Oho! father-in-law, thou deemest me too dull for a crown. I am not dull enough for thy tool. I have

had the wit, at least, to deceive thee, and to hide resentment beneath a smiling brow! Dullard *thou*, to believe aught less than the sovereignty of England could have bribed Clarence to thy cause!" He turned to the table and complacently drained his goblet.

Suddenly, haggard and pale as a spectre, Isabel stood before him.

"I was mad—mad, George! The letter! the letter —it must not go!"

At that moment the clock struck.

"*Bel enfant,*" said the duke, "it is too late."

BOOK X

THE RETURN OF THE KING-MAKER

CHAPTER I

THE MAID'S HOPE, THE COURTIER'S LOVE, AND THE SAGE'S COMFORT

Fair are thy fields, O England; fair the rural farm and the orchards in which the blossoms have ripened into laughing fruits; and fairer than all, O England, the faces of thy soft-eyed daughters.

From the field where Sibyll and her father had wandered amidst the dead, the dismal witnesses of war had vanished; and over the green pastures roved the gentle flocks. And the farm to which Hastings had led the wanderers looked upon that peaceful field through its leafy screen; and there father and daughter had found a home.

It was a lovely summer evening, and Sibyll put aside the broidery-frame, at which, for the last hour, she had *not* worked; and gliding to the lattice, looked wistfully along the winding lane. The room was in the upper story, and was decorated with a care which the exterior of the house little promised, and which almost approached to elegance. The fresh green rushes that strewed the floor were intermingled with dried wild thyme and other fragrant herbs. The bare walls were hung with serge of a bright and cheerful blue; a rich

carpet de cuir covered the oak table, on which lay musical instruments, curiously inlaid, with a few MSS., chiefly of English and Provençal poetry. The tabourets were covered with cushions of Norwich worsted, in gay colours. All was simple, it is true, yet all betokened a comfort—nay, a refinement, an evidence of wealth, very rare in the houses even of the second order of nobility.

As Sibyll gazed, her face suddenly brightened; she uttered a joyous cry—hurried from the room—descended the stairs, and passed her father, who was seated without the porch, and seemingly plunged in one of his most abstracted reveries. She kissed his brow—(he heeded her not)—bounded with light step over the sward of the orchard, and pausing by a wicket gate, listened with throbbing heart, to the advancing sound of a horse's hoofs; nearer came the sound, and nearer. A cavalier appeared in sight, sprang from his saddle, and, leaving his palfrey to find his way to the well-known stable, sprang lightly over the little gate.

"And thou hast watched for me, Sibyll?"

The girl blushingly withdrew from the eager embrace, and said, touchingly—"My heart watcheth for thee alway. Oh, shall I thank or chide thee for so much care! Thou wilt see how thy craftsmen have changed the rugged homestead into the daintiest bower!"

"Alas! my Sibyll! would that it were worthier of thy beauty, and our mutual troth! Blessings on thy trust and sweet patience; may the day soon come when I may lead thee to a nobler home; and hear knight and baron envy the bride of Hastings."

"My own lord!" said Sibyll, with grateful tears in confiding eyes; but, after a pause, she added, timidly —"Does the king still bear so stern a memory against so humble a subject?"

"The king is more wroth than before, since tidings of Lord Warwick's restless machinations in France have soured his temper. He cannot hear thy name without threats against thy father as a secret adherent of Lancaster, and accuseth thee of witching his chamberlain,—as, in truth, thou hast. The Duchess of Bedford is more than ever under the influence of Friar Bungey, to whose spells and charms, and not to our good swords, she ascribes the marvellous flight of Warwick and the dispersion of our foes; and the friar, methinks, has fostered, and yet feeds Edward's suspicions of thy harmless father. The king chides himself for having suffered poor Warner to depart unscathed, and even recalls the disastrous adventure of the mechanical, and swears that, from the first, thy father was in treasonable conspiracy with Margaret. Nay, sure I am, that if I dared to wed thee while his anger lasts, he would condemn thee as a sorceress, and give me up to the secret hate of my old foes, the Woodvilles. But fie! be not so appalled, my Sibyll; Edward's passions, though fierce, are changeful, and patience will reward us both."

"Meanwhile, thou lovest me, Hastings!" said Sibyll, with great emotion. "Oh, if thou knewest how I torment myself in thine absence!—I see thee surrounded by the fairest and the loftiest, and say to myself, 'Is it possible that he can remember me?' But thou lovest me still—still—still, and ever! Dost thou not?"

And Hastings said and swore.

"And the Lady Bonville?" asked Sibyll, trying to smile archly, but with the faltering tone of jealous fear.

"I have not seen her for months," replied the noble,

with a slight change of countenance. "She is at one of their western manors. They say her lord is sorely ill; and the Lady Bonville is a devout hypocrite, and plays the tender wife. But enough of such ancient and worn-out memories. Thy father—sorrows he still for his Eureka? I can learn no trace of it."

"See," said Sibyll, recalled to her filial love, and pointing to Warner as they now drew near the house, "see, he shapes another Eureka from his thoughts!"

"How fares it, dear Warner?" asked the noble, taking the scholar's hand.

"Ah!" cried the student, roused at the sight of his powerful protector. "Bringest thou tidings of IT? Thy cheerful eye tells me that—no—no—thy face changes! They have destroyed it! Oh that I could be young once more!"

"What!" said the world-wise man, astonished. "If thou hadst another youth, wouldst thou cherish the same delusion, and go again through a life of hardship, persecution, and wrong?"

"My noble son," said the philosopher, "for hours when I have felt the wrong, the persecution, and the hardship, count the days and the nights when I have felt only the hope, and the glory, and the joy! God is kinder to us all than man can know; for man looks only to the sorrow on the surface, and sees not the consolation in the deeps of the unwitnessed soul."

Sibyll had left Hastings by her father's side, and tripped lightly to the farther part of the house, inhabited by the rustic owners who supplied the homely service, to order the evening banquet,—the happy banquet; for hunger gives not such flavour to the viand, nor thirst such sparkle to the wine, as the presence of a beloved guest.

And as the courtier seated himself on the rude settle, under the honeysuckles that wreathed the porch, a delicious calm stole over his sated mind. The pure soul of the student, released awhile from the tyranny of an earthly pursuit—the drudgery of a toil that, however grand, still but ministered to human and material science—had found for its only other element the contemplation of more solemn and eternal mysteries. Soaring naturally, as a bird freed from a golden cage, into the realms of heaven, he began now, with earnest and spiritual eloquence, to talk of the things and visions lately made familiar to his thoughts. Mounting from philosophy to religion, he indulged in his large ideas upon life and nature: of the stars that now came forth in heaven; of the laws that gave harmony to the universe; of the evidence of a God in the mechanism of creation; of the spark from central divinity, that, kindling in a man's soul, we call "genius;" of the eternal resurrection of the dead, which makes the very principle of being, and types, in the leaf and in the atom, the immortality of the great human race. He was sublimer, that grey old man, hunted from the circle of his kind—in his words, than ever is action in its deeds; for words can fathom truth, and deeds but blunderingly and lamely seek it.

And the sad, and gifted, and erring intellect of Hastings, rapt from its little ambition of the hour, had no answer when his heart asked, "What can courts and a king's smile give me in exchange for serene tranquillity and devoted love?"

CHAPTER II

THE MAN AWAKES IN THE SAGE, AND THE SHE-WOLF AGAIN TRACKED THE LAMB

From the night in which Hastings had saved from the knives of the tymbesteres Sibyll and her father, his honour and chivalry had made him their protector. The people of the farm (a widow and her children, with the peasants in their employ) were kindly and simple folks. What safer home for the wanderers than that to which Hastings had removed them? The influence of Sibyll over his variable heart or fancy was renewed. Again, vows were interchanged, and faith plighted. Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers, who, however gallant an enemy, was still more than ever, since Warwick's exile, a formidable one, and who shared his sister's dislike to Hastings, was naturally, at that time, in the fullest favour of King Edward, anxious to atone for the brief disgrace his brother-in-law had suffered during the later days of Warwick's administration. And Hastings, offended by the manners of the rival favourite, took one of the disgusts so frequent in the life of a courtier, and, despite his office of chamberlain, absented himself much from his sovereign's company. Thus, in the reaction of his mind, the influence of Sibyll was greater than it otherwise might have been. His visits to the farm grew regular and frequent. The widow believed him nearly related to Sibyll, and suspected Warner to be some attainted Lancastrian, compelled to hide in secret till his pardon was obtained; and no scandal was attached to the noble's visits, nor any surprise evinced at his attentive

care for all that could lend a grace to a temporary refuge unfitting the quality of his supposed kindred.

And, in her entire confidence and reverential affection, Sibyll's very pride was rather soothed than wounded by obligations which were but proofs of love, and to which plighted troth gave her a sweet right. As for Warner, he had hitherto seemed to regard the great lord's attentions only as a tribute to his own science, and a testimony of the interest which a statesman might naturally feel in the invention of a thing that might benefit the realm. And Hastings had been delicate in the pretexts of his visits. One time he called to relate the death of poor Madge, though he kindly concealed the manner of it, which he had discovered, but which opinion, if not law, forbade him to attempt to punish: drowning was but the orthodox ordeal of a suspected witch, and it was not without many scruples that the poor woman was interred in holy ground. The search for the Eureka was a pretence that sufficed for countless visits; and then, too, Hastings had counselled Adam to sell the ruined house, and undertaken the negotiation; and the new comforts of their present residence, and the expense of the maintenance, were laid to the account of the sale. Hastings had begun to consider Adam Warner as utterly blind and passive to the things that passed under his eyes; and his astonishment was great when, the morning after the visit we have just recorded, Adam suddenly lifting his eyes, and seeing the guest whispering soft tales in Sibyll's ear, rose abruptly, approached the nobleman, took him gently by the arm, led him into the garden, and thus addressed him:—

"Noble lord, you have been tender and generous in our misfortunes. The poor Eureka is lost to me and

the world for ever. God's will be done! Methinks Heaven designs thereby to rouse me to the sense of nearer duties; and I have a daughter whose name I adjure you not to sully, and whose heart I pray you not to break. Come hither no more, my Lord Hastings."

This speech, almost the only one which showed plain sense and judgment in the affairs of this life that the man of genius had ever uttered, so confounded Hastings, that he with difficulty recovered himself enough to say—

"My poor scholar, what hath so suddenly kindled suspicions which wrong thy child and me?"

"Last eve, when we sate together, I saw your hand steal into hers, and suddenly I remembered the day when *I* was young, and wooed her mother! And last night I slept not, and sense and memory became active for my living child, as they were wont to be only for the iron infant of my mind, and I said to myself—'Lord Hastings is King Edward's friend; and King Edward spares not maiden honour. Lord Hastings is a mighty peer, and he will not wed the dowerless and worse than nameless girl!' Be merciful! Depart—depart!"

"But," exclaimed Hastings, "if I love thy sweet Sibyll in all honesty—if I have plighted to her my troth——"

"Alas—alas!" groaned Adam.

"If I wait but my king's permission to demand her wedded hand, couldst thou forbid me the presence of my affianced?"

"She loves thee, then?" said Adam, in a tone of great anguish—"she lovès thee—speak!"

"It is my pride to think it."

"Then go—go at once; come back no more till thou hast wound up thy courage to brave the sacrifice; no, not till the priest is ready at the altar—not till the bridegroom can claim the bride. And as that time will never come—never—never—leave me to whisper to the breaking heart,—'Courage;—honour and virtue are left thee yet, and thy mother from heaven looks down on a stainless child!'"

The resuscitation of the dead could scarcely have startled and awed the courtier more than this abrupt development of life and passion and energy, in a man who had hitherto seemed to sleep in the folds of his thought, as a chrysalis in its web. But as we have always seen that ever, when this strange being woke from his ideal abstraction, he awoke to honour and courage and truth,—so now, whether, as he had said, the absence of the Eureka left his mind to the sense of practical duties, or whether their common suffering had more endeared to him his gentle companion, and affection sharpened reason, Adam Warner became puissant and majestic in his rights and sanctity of father; greater in his homely household character, than when, in his mania of inventor, and the sublime hunger of aspiring genius, he had stolen to his daughter's couch, and waked her with the cry of "Gold!"

Before the force and power of Adam's adjuration,—his outstretched hand—the anguish, yet authority, written on his face—all the art and self-possession of the accomplished lover deserted him, as one spell-bound.

He was literally without reply; till, suddenly, the sight of Sibyll, who, surprised by this singular conference, but unsuspecting its nature, now came from the house, relieved and nerved him; and his first im-

pulse was then, as ever, worthy and noble, such as showed, though dimly, how glorious a creature he had been, if cast in a time and amidst a race, which could have *fostered the impulse into habit.*

"Brave old man!" he said, kissing the hand still raised in command—"thou hast spoken as beseems thee; and my answer I will tell thy child." Then hurrying to the wondering Sibyll, he resumed: "Your father says well, that not thus, dubious and in secret, should I visit the home blest by thy beloved presence—I obey;—I leave thee, Sibyll. I go to my king, as one who hath served him long and truly, and claims his guerdon—*thee!*"

"Oh, my lord!" exclaimed Sibyll, in generous terror; "bethink thee well—remember what thou saidst but last eve. This king so fierce—my name so hated! No—no! leave me. Farewell for ever, if it be right, as what thou and my father say must be. But thy life—thy liberty—thy welfare—*they* are my happiness—thou hast no right to endanger *them!*" And she fell at his knees. He raised, and strained her to his heart; then resigning her to her father's arms, he said in a voice choked with emotion—

"Not as peer and as knight, but as man, I claim my prerogative of home and hearth! Let Edward frown—call back his gifts—banish me his court—thou art more worth than all! Look for me—sigh not—weep not—*smile* till we meet again!" He left them with these words—hastened to the stall where his steed stood, caparisoned it with his own hands, and rode with the speed of one whom passion spurs and goads, towards the Tower of London.

But as Sibyll started from her father's arms, when she heard the departing hoofs of her lover's steed,—to

listen and to listen for the last sound that told of *him,* a terrible apparition, ever ominous of woe and horror, met her eye. On the other side of the orchard fence, which concealed her figure, but not her well-known face, which peered above, stood the tymbestere, Graul. A shriek of terror at this recognition burst from Sibyll, as she threw herself again upon Adam's breast; but when he looked round, to discover the cause of her alarm—Graul was gone.

CHAPTER III

VIRTUOUS RESOLVES SUBMITTED TO THE TEST OF VANITY AND THE WORLD

On reaching his own house, Hastings learned that the court was still at Shene. He waited but till the retinue which his rank required were equipped and ready, and reached the court, from which of late he had found so many excuses to absent himself, before night. Edward was then at the banquet, and Hastings was too experienced a courtier to disturb him at such a time. In a mood unfit for compatronship, he took his way to the apartments usually reserved for him, when a gentleman met him by the way, and apprised him, with great respect, that the Lord Scales and Rivers had already appropriated those apartments to the principal waiting-lady of his countess,—but that other chambers, if less commodious and spacious, were at his command.

Hastings had not the superb and more than regal pride of Warwick and Montagu; but this notice sensibly piqued and galled him.

"My apartments as Lord Chamberlain—as one of the captain-generals in the king's army, given to the waiting-lady of Sir Anthony Woodville's wife!—At whose orders, sir?"

"Her highness the queen's—pardon me, my lord," and the gentleman, looking round, and sinking his voice, continued—"pardon me, her highness added, 'If my Lord Chamberlain returns not ere the week ends, he may find not only the apartment, but the office, no longer free.' My lord, we all love you—forgive my zeal, and look well if you would guard your own."

"Thanks, sir.—Is my lord of Gloucester in the palace?"

"He is—and in his chamber. He sits not long at the feast."

"Oblige me, by craving his grace's permission to wait on him at leisure—I attend his answer here."

Leaning against the wall of the corridor, Hastings gave himself up to other thoughts than those of love! —So strong is habit—so powerful vanity or ambition, once indulged, that this puny slight made a sudden revulsion in the mind of the royal favourite;—once more the agitated and brilliant court life stirred and fevered him!—that life, so wearisome when secure, became sweet when imperilled. To counteract his foes—to humble his rivals—to regain the king's countenance—to baffle, with the easy art of his skilful intellect, every hostile stratagem—such were the ideas that crossed and hurtled themselves, and Sibyll was forgotten.

The gentleman reappeared. "Prince Richard besought my lord's presence with loving welcome;" and to the duke's apartment went Lord Hastings. Richard, clad in a loose chamber robe, which concealed the defects of his shape, rose from before a table covered with

papers, and embraced Hastings with cordial affection.

"Never more gladly hail to thee, dear William. I need thy wise counsels with the king, and I have glad tidings for thine own ear."

"*Pardieu,* my prince; the king, methinks, will scarce heed the counsels of a dead man."

"Dead?"

"Ay. At courts it seems men are dead—their rooms filled, their places promised or bestowed, if they come not, morn and night, to convince the king that they are alive." And Hastings, with constrained gaiety, repeated the information he had received.

"What would you, Hastings?" said the duke, shrugging his shoulders, but with some latent meaning in his tone. "Lord Rivers were nought in himself; but his lady is a mighty heiress,* and requires state, as she bestows pomp. Look round, and tell me what man ever maintained himself in power without the strong connections, the convenient dower, the acute, unseen, unsleeping woman-influence of some noble wife? How can a poor man defend his repute, his popular name, that airy but all puissant thing we call *dignity* or *station,* against the pricks and stings of female intrigue and female gossip? But he marries, and, lo, a host of fairy champions, who pinch the rival lozels unawares: his wife hath her army of courtpie and jupon, to array against the dames of his foes! Wherefore, my friend, while thou art unwedded, think not to cope with Lord Rivers, who hath a wife, with three sisters, two aunts, and a score of she-cousins!"

* Elizabeth secured to her brother, Sir Anthony, the greatest heiress in the kingdom—in the daughter of Lord Scales—a wife, by the way, who is said to have been a mere child at the time of the marriage.

"And if," replied Hastings, more and more unquiet under the duke's truthful irony,—"if I were now come to ask the king permission to wed——"

"If thou wert, and the bride-elect were a lady, with power and wealth and manifold connections, and the practice of a court, thou wouldst be the mightiest lord in the kingdom since Warwick's exile."

"And if she had but youth, beauty, and virtue?"

"Oh, then, my Lord Hastings, pray thy patron saint for a war—for in peace thou wouldst be lost amongst the crowd. But truce to these jests; for thou art not the man to prate of youth, virtue, and such like, in sober earnest, amidst this work-day world, where nothing is young and nothing virtuous;—and listen to grave matters."

The duke then communicated to Hastings the last tidings received of the machinations of Warwick. He was in high spirits; for those last tidings but reported Margaret's refusal to entertain the proposition of a nuptial alliance with the earl, though, on the other hand, the Duke of Burgundy, who was in constant correspondence with his spies, wrote word that Warwick was collecting provisions, from his own means, for more than 60,000 men; and that, with Lancaster or without, the earl was prepared to match his own family interest against the armies of Edward.

"And," said Hastings, "if all his family joined with him, what foreign king could be so formidable an invader? Maltravers and the Mowbrays, Fauconberg, Westmoreland, Fitzhugh, Stanley, Bonville, Worcester——"

"But happily," said Gloucester, "the Mowbrays have been allied also to the queen's sister; Worcester detests Warwick; Stanley always murmurs against us,

a sure sign that he will fight for us; and Bonville—I have in view a trusty Yorkist to whom the retainers of *that* house shall be assigned. But of that anon. What I now wish from thy wisdom is, to aid me in rousing Edward from his lethargy: he laughs at his danger, and neither communicates with his captains nor mans his coasts. His courage makes him a dullard."

After some further talk on these heads, and more detailed account of the preparations which Gloucester deemed necessary to urge on the king, the duke, then moving his chair nearer to Hastings, said, with a smile,—

"And now, Hastings, to thyself: it seems, that thou hast not heard the news which reached us four days since—the Lord Bonville is dead—died three months * ago at his manor house in Devon. Thy Katherine is free, and in London. Well, man, where is thy joy?"

"Time *is*—time *was!*" said Hastings gloomily. "The day has passed when this news could rejoice me."

"Passed! nay, thy good stars themselves have fought for thee in delay. Seven goodly manors swell the fair widow's jointure; the noble dowry she brought returns to her. Her very daughter will bring thee power. Young Cecily Bonville, the heiress,† Lord Dorset demands in betrothal. Thy wife will be mother-in-law to thy queen's son; on the other hand, she is already aunt to the Duchess of Clarence; and George, be sure, sooner or later, will desert Warwick, and win his pardon. Powerful connections—vast possessions—

* To those who have read the "Paston Letters," it will not seem strange that in that day the death of a nobleman at his country seat should be so long in reaching the metropolis—the ordinary purveyors of communication were the itinerant attendants of fairs. And a father might be ignorant for months together of the death of his son.

† Afterwards married to Dorset.

a lady of immaculate name and surpassing beauty, and thy first love!—(thy hand trembles!)—thy first love—thy sole love, and thy last!"

"Prince—Prince! forbear! Even if so——in brief, Katherine loves me not!"

"Thou mistakest! I have seen her, and she loves thee not the less because her virtue so long concealed the love."

Hastings uttered an exclamation of passionate joy, but again his face darkened.

Gloucester watched him in silence; besides any motives suggested by the affection he then sincerely bore to Hastings, policy might well interest the duke in the securing to so loyal a Yorkist the hand and the wealth of Lord Warwick's sister; but, prudently, not pressing the subject further, he said, in an altered and careless voice, "Pardon me if I have presumed on matters on which each man judges for himself. But as, despite all obstacle, one day or other Anne Nevile *shall* be mine, it would have delighted me to know a near connection in Lord Hastings. And now, the hour grows late, I prithee let Edward find thee in his chamber."

When Hastings attended the king, he at once perceived that Edward's manner was changed to him. At first, he attributed the cause to the ill-offices of the queen and her brother; but the king soon betrayed the true source of his altered humour.

"My lord," he said, abruptly, "I am no saint, as thou knowest; but there are some ties, *par amour*, which, in my mind, become not knights and nobles about a king's person."

"My liege, I arede you not!"

"Tush, William!" replied the king, more gently, "thou hast more than once wearied me with applica-

tion for the pardon of the nigromancer Warner—the whole court is scandalised at thy love for his daughter. Thou hast absented thyself from thine office on poor pretexts! I know thee too well not to be aware that love alone can make thee neglect thy king—thy time has been spent at the knees or in the arms of this young sorceress! One word for all times—he whom a witch snares cannot be a king's true servant! I ask of thee as a right, or as a grace—see this fair *ribaude* no more! What, man, are there not ladies enough in merry England, that thou shouldst undo thyself for so unchristian a fere?"

"My king! how can this poor maid have angered thee thus?"

"Knowest thou not"—began the king, sharply, and changing colour as he eyed his favourite's mournful astonishment,—

"Ah, well!" he muttered to himself, "they have been discreet hitherto, but how long will they be so? I am in time yet. It is enough,"—he added, aloud and gravely—"it is enough that our learned * Bungey holds her father as a most pestilent wizard, whose spells are muttered for Lancaster and the rebel Warwick; that the girl hath her father's unholy gifts, and I lay my command on thee, as liege king, and I pray thee, as loving friend, to see no more either child or sire! Let this suffice—and now I will hear thee on state matters."

Whatever Hastings might feel, he saw that it was no time to venture remonstrance with the king, and strove to collect his thoughts, and speak indifferently on the high interests to which Edward invited him; but he

* It will be remembered that Edward himself was a man of no learning.

was so distracted and absent that he made but a sorry counsellor, and the king, taking pity on him, dismissed his chamberlain for the night.

Sleep came not to the couch of Hastings; his acuteness perceived that whatever Edward's superstition, and he was a devout believer in witchcraft, some more worldly motive actuated him in his resentment to poor Sibyll. But, as we need scarcely say, that neither from the abstracted Warner, nor his innocent daughter, had Hastings learned the true cause, he wearied himself with vain conjectures, and knew not that Edward involuntarily did homage to the superior chivalry of his gallant favourite, when he dreaded that, above all men, Hastings should be made aware of the guilty secret which the philosopher and his child could tell. If Hastings gave his name and rank to Sibyll, how powerful a weight would the tale of a witness now so obscure suddenly acquire!

Turning from the image of Sibyll, thus beset with thoughts of danger, embarrassment, humiliation, disgrace, ruin, Lord Hastings recalled the words of Gloucester; and the stately image of Katherine surrounded with every memory of early passion—every attribute of present ambition—rose before him, and he slept at last, to dream not of Sibyll and the humble orchard, but of Katherine in her maiden bloom—of the trysting-tree, by the Halls of Middleham—of the broken ring—of the rapture and the woe of his youth's first high-placed love.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRIFE WHICH SIBYLL HAD COURTED, BETWEEN KATHERINE AND HERSELF, COMMENCES IN SERIOUS EARNEST

Hastings felt relieved when, the next day, several couriers arrived, with tidings so important as to merge all considerations into those of state. A secret messenger from the French court threw Gloucester into one of those convulsive passions of rage, to which, with all his intellect and dissimulation, he was sometimes subject—by the news of Anne's betrothal to Prince Edward; nor did the letter from Clarence to the king, attesting the success of one of his schemes, comfort Richard for the failure of the other. A letter from Burgundy confirmed the report of the spy, announced Duke Charles's intention of sending a fleet to prevent Warwick's invasion, and rated King Edward sharply for his supineness in not preparing suitably against so formidable a foe. The gay and reckless presumption of Edward, worthier of a knight-errant than a monarch, laughed at the word *Invasion*. "Pest on Burgundy's ships! I only wish that the earl would land!" * he said to his council. None echoed the wish! But later in the day came a third messenger with information that roused all Edward's ire; careless of each danger in the distance, he ever sprang into energy and vengeance when a foe was already in the field. And the Lord Fitzhugh (the young nobleman before seen among the rebels at Olney, and who had now succeeded to the honours of his house) had sud-

* Com. iii. c. 5.

denly risen in the north, at the head of a formidable rebellion. No man had so large an experience in the warfare of those districts, the temper of the people, and the inclinations of the various towns and lordships as Montagu; he was the natural chief to depute against the rebels. Some animated discussion took place as to the dependence to be placed in the marquis at such a crisis; but while the more wary held it safer, at all hazards, not to leave him unemployed, and to command his services in an expedition that would remove him from the neighbourhood of his brother, should the latter land, as was expected, on the coast of Norfolk, Edward, with a blindness of conceit that seems almost incredible, believed firmly in the infatuated loyalty of the man whom he had slighted and impoverished, and whom, by his offer of his daughter to the Lancastrian prince, he had yet more recently cozened and deluded. Montagu was hastily summoned, and received orders to march at once to the north, levy forces and assume their command. The marquis obeyed with fewer words than were natural to him—left the presence, sprang on his horse, and as he rode from the palace, drew a letter from his bosom. "Ah, Edward," said he, setting his teeth; "so, after the solemn betrothal of thy daughter to my son, thou wouldst have given her to thy Lancastrian enemy. Coward, to bribe his peace!—recreant, to belie thy word! I thank thee for this news, Warwick; for without that injury I feel I could never, when the hour came, have drawn sword against this faithless man,—especially for Lancaster. Ay, tremble, thou who deridest all truth and honour! He who himself betrays, cannot call vengeance treason!"

Meanwhile, Edward departed, for farther prepara-

tions, to the Tower of London. New evidences of the mine beneath his feet here awaited the incredulous king. On the door of St. Paul's, of many of the metropolitan churches, on the Standard at Chepe, and on London Bridge, during the past night, had been affixed, none knew by whom, the celebrated proclamation, signed by Warwick and Clarence (drawn up in the bold style of the earl), announcing their speedy return, containing a brief and vigorous description of the misrule of the realm, and their determination to reform all evils and redress all wrongs.* Though the proclamation named not the restoration of the Lancastrian line (doubtless from regard for Henry's safety), all men in the metropolis were already aware of the formidable league between Margaret and Warwick. Yet, even still, Edward smiled in contempt, for he had faith in the letter received from Clarence, and felt assured that the moment the duke and the earl landed, the former would betray his companion stealthily to the king; so, despite all these exciting subjects of grave alarm, the nightly banquet at the Tower was never merrier and more joyous. Hastings left the feast ere it deepened into revel, and, absorbed in various and profound contemplation, entered his apartment. He threw himself on a seat, and leant his face on his hands.

"Oh, no—no!" he muttered, "now, in the hour when true greatness is most seen—when prince and peer crowd around me for counsel—when noble, knight, and squire, crave permission to march in the troop of which Hastings is the leader—*now* I feel how impossible, how falsely fair, the dream that I could forget all—all for a life of obscurity—for a young girl's

* See, for this proclamation, Ellis's "Original Letters," vol. i., second series, Letter 42.

love! Love! as if I had not felt its delusions to palling! love, as if I could love again: or, if love—alas, it must be a light reflected but from memory! And Katherine is free once more!" His eye fell as he spoke, perhaps in shame and remorse that, feeling thus now, he had felt so differently when he bade Sibyll smile till his return!

"It is the air of this accursed court which taints our best resolves!" he murmured, as an apology for himself; but scarcely was the poor excuse made, than the murmur broke into an exclamation of surprise and joy. A letter lay before him—he recognised the hand of Katherine. What years had passed since her writing had met his eye, since the lines that bade him "farewell, and forget!" *Those* lines had been blotted with tears, and *these,* as he tore open the silk that bound them—*these,* the trace of tears, too, was on them! Yet they were but few, and in tremulous characters. They ran thus:—

"To-morrow, before noon, the Lord Hastings is prayed to visit one whose life he hath saddened by the thought and the accusation that she hath clouded and embittered his.

"KATHERINE DE BONVILLE."

Leaving Hastings to such meditations of fear or of hope, as these lines could call forth, we lead the reader to a room not very distant from his own—the room of the illustrious Friar Bungey.

The ex-tregetour was standing before the captured Eureka, and gazing on it with an air of serio-comic despair and rage. We say the Eureka, as comprising all the ingenious contrivances towards one single object invented by its maker, an harmonious compound

of many separate details;—but the iron creature no longer deserved that superb appellation, for its various members were now disjointed and dislocated, and lay pell-mell in multiform confusion.

By the side of the friar stood a female, enveloped in a long scarlet mantle, with the hood partially drawn over the face, but still leaving visible the hard, thin, villanous lips, the stern, sharp chin, and the jaw resolute and solid as if hewed from stone.

"I tell thee, Graul," said the friar, "that thou hast had far the best of the bargain. I have put this diabolical contrivance to all manner of shapes, and have muttered over it enough Latin to have charmed a monster into civility. And the accursed thing, after nearly pinching off three fingers, and scalding me with seething water, and spluttering and sputtering enough to have terrified any man but Friar Bungey out of his skin, is *obstinatus ut mulus*—dogged as a mule; and was absolutely good for nought, till I happily thought of separating this vessel from all the rest of the gear, and it serves now for the boiling my eggs! But by the soul of Father Merlin, whom the saints assoil, I need not have given myself all this torment for a thing which, at best, does the work of a farthing pipkin!"

"Quick, master; the hour is late! I must go while yet the troopers and couriers, and riders, hurrying to and fro, keep the gates from closing. What wantest thou with Graul?"

"More reverence, child!" growled the friar. "What I want of thee is briefly told, if thou hast the wit to serve me. This miserable Warner must himself expound to me the uses and trick of his malignant contrivance. Thou must find and bring him hither!"

"And if he will not expound?"

"The deputy-governor of the Tower will lend me a stone dungeon, and, if need be, the use of the brake to unlock the dotard's tongue."

"On what plea?"

"That Adam Warner is a wizard, in the pay of Lord Warwick, whom a more mighty master like myself alone can duly examine and defeat."

"And if I bring thee the sorcerer—what wilt thou teach me in return?"

"What desirest thou most?"

Graul mused and said, "There is war in the wind. Graul follows the camp—her trooper gets gold and booty. But the trooper is stronger than Graul; and when the trooper sleeps it is with his knife by his side, and his sleep is light and broken, for he has wicked dreams. Give me a potion to make sleep deep, that his eyes may not open when Graul filches his gold, and his hand may be too heavy to draw the knife from its sheath!"

"Immunda—detestabilis!—thine own paramour!"

"He hath beat me with his bridle rein, he hath given a silver broad piece to Grisell; Grisell hath sate on his knee; Graul never pardons!"

The friar, rogue as he was, shuddered. "I cannot help thee to murder, I cannot give thee the potion; name some other reward."

"I go——"

"Nay, nay—think—pause."

"I know where Warner is hid. By this hour to-morrow night, I can place him in thy power. Say the word, and pledge me the draught."

"Well, well, *mulier abominabilis!*—that is, irresistible bonnibel. I cannot give thee the potion; but I will teach thee an art which can make sleep heavier than

the anodyne, and which wastes not like the essence, but strengthens by usage; an art thou shalt have at thy fingers' ends, and which often draws from the sleeper the darkest secrets of his heart." *

"It is magic," said Graul, with joy.

"Ay, magic."

"I will bring thee the wizard. But listen; he never stirs abroad, save with his daughter. I must bring both."

"Nay—I want not the girl."

"But I dare not throttle her, for a great lord loves her—who would find out the deed and avenge it; and, if she be left behind, she will go to the lord, and the lord will discover what thou hast done with the wizard, and thou wilt hang!"

"Never say 'Hang' to me, Graul; it is ill-mannered and ominous. Who is the lord?"

"Hastings."

"Pest!—and already he hath been searching for the thing yonder; and I have brooded over it night and day, like a hen over a chalk egg—only that the egg does not snap off the hen's claws, as that diabolism would fain snap off my digits. But the war will carry Hastings away in its whirlwind; and, in danger, the duchess is my slave, and will bear me through all. So, thou mayst bring the girl; and strangle her not; for no good ever comes of a murder,—unless, indeed, it be absolutely necessary!"

"I know the men who will help me, bold *ribauds,* whom I will guerdon myself; for I want not thy coins, but thy craft. When the curfew has tolled, and the bat hunts the moth, we will bring thee the quarry——"

* We have before said that animal magnetism was known to Bungey, and familiar to the necromancers or rather theurgists of the middle ages.

Graul turned—but as she gained the door, she stopped, and said abruptly, throwing back her hood—

"What age dost thou deem me?"

"Marry," quoth the friar—"an' I had not seen thee on thy mother's knee when she followed my stage of Tregetour—I should have guessed thee for thirty, but thou hast led too jolly a life to look still in the blossom—why speer'st thou the question?"

"Because when trooper and *ribaud* say to me—'Graul, thou art too worn and too old to drink of our cup and sit in the lap, to follow the young fere to the battle, and weave the blithe dance in the fair,'—I would depart from my sisters, and have a hut of my own—and a black cat without a white hair, and steal herbs by the new moon, and bones from the charnel—and curse those whom I hate—and cleave the misty air on a besom, like Mother Halkin, of Edmonton. Ha, ha! Master, thou shalt present me then to the *Sabbat*. Graul has the metal for a bonny witch!"

The tymbestere vanished with a laugh. The friar muttered a paternoster for once, perchance, devoutly; and after having again deliberately scanned the *disjecta membra* of the Eureka, gravely took forth a duck's egg from his cupboard, and applied the master-agent of the machine which Warner hoped was to change the face of the globe to the only practical utility it possessed to the mountebank's comprehension.

CHAPTER V

THE MEETING OF HASTINGS AND KATHERINE

The next morning, while Edward was engaged in levying from his opulent citizens all the loans he could extract, knowing that gold is the sinew of war—while Worcester was manning the fortress of the Tower, in which the queen, then near her confinement, was to reside during the campaign—while Gloucester was writing commissions to captains and barons to raise men—while Sir Anthony Lord Rivers was ordering improvements in his dainty damasquine armour—and the whole Fortress Palatine was animated and alive with the stir of the coming strife—Lord Hastings escaped from the bustle, and repaired to the house of Katherine. With what motive, with what intentions, was not known clearly to himself;—perhaps, for there was bitterness in his very love for Katherine, to enjoy the retaliation due to his own wounded pride, and say to the idol of his youth, as he had said to Gloucester—"Time *is*—time *was;*"—perhaps with some remembrance of the faith due to Sibyll, wakened up the more now that Katherine seemed actually to escape from the ideal image into the real woman—to be easily wooed and won. But, certainly, Sibyll's cause was not wholly lost, though greatly shaken and endangered, when Lord Hastings alighted at Lady Bonville's gate; but his face gradually grew paler, his mien less assured, as he drew near and nearer to the apartment and the presence of the widowed Katherine.

She was seated alone, and in the same room in which he had last seen her. Her deep mourning only served,

by contrasting the pale and exquisite clearness of her complexion, to enhance her beauty. Hastings bowed low, and seated himself by her side in silence.

The Lady of Bonville eyed him for some moments with an unutterable expression of melancholy and tenderness. All her pride seemed to have gone; the very character of her face was changed: grave severity had become soft timidity, and stately self-control was broken into the unmistaken struggle of hope and fear.

"Hastings—*William!*" she said, in a gentle and low whisper, and at the sound of that last name from those lips, the noble felt his veins thrill and his heart throb. "If," she continued, "the step I have taken seems to thee unwomanly and too bold, know, at least, what was my design and my excuse. There was a time" (and Katherine blushed) "when, thou knowest well, that, had this hand been mine to bestow, it would have been his who claimed the half of this ring." And Katherine took from a small crystal casket the well-remembered token.

"The broken ring foretold but the broken troth," said Hastings, averting his face.

"Thy conscience rebukes thy words," replied Katherine, sadly; "I pledged my faith, if thou couldst win my father's word. What maid, and that maid a Nevile, could so forget duty and honour as to pledge thee more? We were severed. Pass—oh, pass over that time! My father loved me dearly; but when did pride and ambition ever deign to take heed of the wild fancies of a girl's heart? Three suitors, wealthy lords,—whose alliance gave strength to my kindred, in the day when their very lives depended on their swords,—were rivals for Earl Salisbury's daughter. Earl Salisbury bade his daughter choose. Thy great friend, and my

own kinsman, Duke Richard of York, himself pleaded for thy rivals. He proved to me that my disobedience —if, indeed, for the first time, a child of my house could disobey its chief—would be an eternal barrier to *thy* fortune; that while Salisbury was thy foe, he himself could not advance thy valiancy and merit; that it was with me to forward thy ambition, though I could not reward thy love; that from the hour I was another's, my mighty kinsmen themselves—for they were generous—would be the first to aid the duke in thy career. Hastings, even then I would have prayed, at least, to be the bride, not of man, but God. But I was trained—as what noble demoiselle is not?—to submit wholly to a parent's welfare and his will. As a nun, I could but pray for the success of my father's cause; as a wife, I should bring to Salisbury and to York the retainers and the strongholds of a baron! I obeyed. Hear me on. Of the three suitors for my hand, two were young and gallant—women deemed them fair and comely; and had my choice been one of these, thou mightest have deemed that a new love had chased the old. Since choice was mine, I chose the man *love* could not choose, and took this sad comfort to my heart—'*He*, the forsaken Hastings, will see, in my very choice, that I was but the slave of duty—my choice itself my penance.'"

Katherine paused, and tears dropped fast from her eyes. Hastings held his hand over his countenance, and only by the heaving of his heart was his emotion visible. Katherine resumed:—

"Once wedded, I knew what became a wife. We met again; and to thy first disdain and anger—(which it had been dishonour in me to soothe by one word that said, 'The wife remembers the maiden's love')—to

these, thy first emotions, succeeded the more cruel revenge, which would have changed sorrow and struggle to remorse and shame. And then, then—weak woman that I was—I wrapped myself in scorn and pride. Nay, I felt deep anger—was it unjust?—that thou couldst so misread, and so repay, the heart which had nothing left, save virtue, to compensate for love. And yet, yet, often when thou didst deem me most hard, most proof against memory and feeling——but why relate the trial? Heaven supported me, and if thou lovest me no longer, thou canst not despise me."

At these last words, Hastings was at her feet, bending over her hand, and stifled by his emotions. Katherine gazed at him for a moment through her own tears, and then resumed:—

"But thou hadst, as *man,* consolations no woman would desire or covet. And oh, what grieved me most was, not—no, not the jealous, the wounded vanity, but it was at least this self-accusation, this remorse, that—but for one goading remembrance, of love returned and love forsaken,—thou hadst never so descended from thy younger nature, never so trifled with the solemn trust of TIME. Ah, when I have heard, or seen, or fancied one fault in thy maturer manhood, unworthy of thy bright youth, anger of myself has made me bitter and stern to thee; and if I taunted, or chid, or vexed thy pride, how little didst thou know that through the too shrewish humour spoke the too soft remembrance! For this—for this; and believing that through all, alas! my image was not replaced—when my hand was free, I was grateful that I might still—" (the lady's pale cheek grew brighter than the rose, her voice faltered, and became low and indistinct)—"I might still think it mine to atone to thee for the past. And if," she

added, with a sudden and generous energy, "if in this I have bowed my pride, it is because by pride thou wert wounded; and now, at last, thou hast a just revenge."

O terrible rival for thee, lost Sibyll! Was it wonderful that, while that head drooped upon his breast, while in that enchanted change which Love the softener makes in lips long scornful, eyes long proud and cold, he felt that Katherine Nevile—tender, gentle, frank without boldness, lofty without arrogance—had replaced the austere dame of Bonville, whom he half hated while he wooed,—oh, was it wonderful that the soul of Hastings fled back to the old time, forgot the intervening vows, and more chill affections, and repeated only with passionate lips—"Katherine, loved still, loved ever—mine, mine, at last!"

Then followed delicious silence—then vows, confessions, questions, answers—the thrilling interchange of hearts long divided, and now rushing into one. And time rolled on, till Katherine, gently breaking from her lover, said—

"And now, that thou hast the right to know and guide my projects, approve, I pray thee, my present purpose. War awaits thee, and we must part awhile!" At these words her brow darkened and her lip quivered. "Oh, that I should have lived to mourn the day when Lord Warwick, untrue to Salisbury and to York, joined his arms with Lancaster and Margaret—the day when Katherine could blush for the brother she had deemed the glory of her house! No, no" (she continued, as Hastings interrupted her with generous excuses for the earl, and allusion to the known slights he had received),—"No, no; make not his cause the worse, by telling me that an unworthy pride, the grudge of some thwart to his policy or power, has made him

forget what was due to the memory of his kinsman York, to the mangled corpse of his father Salisbury. Thinkest thou, that but for this, I could——" She stopped, but Hastings divined her thought, and guessed that, if spoken, it had run thus:—"That I could, even now, have received the homage of one who departs to meet, with banner and clarion, my brother as his foe?" The lovely sweetness of the late expression had gone from Katherine's face, and its aspect showed that her high and ancestral spirit had yielded but to one passion. She pursued—

"While this strife lasts, it becomes my widowhood, and kindred position with the earl, to retire to the convent my mother founded. To-morrow I depart."

"Alas!" said Hastings, "thou speakest of the strife as if but a single field. But Warwick returns not to these shores, nor bows himself to league with Lancaster,—for a chance hazardous and desperate, as Edward too rashly deems it. It is in vain to deny that the earl is prepared for a grave and lengthened war, and much I doubt whether Edward can resist his power; for the idolatry of the very land will swell the ranks of so dread a rebel. What if he succeed—what if we be driven into exile, as Henry's friends before us—what if the king-maker be the king-dethroner?—then, Katherine, then once more thou wilt be at the hest of thy hostile kindred, and once more, dowered as thou art, and thy womanhood still in its richest bloom, thy hand will be lost to Hastings."

"Nay, if that be all thy fear, take with thee this pledge—that Warwick's treason to the house for which my father fell, dissolves his power over one driven to disown him as a brother;—knowing Earl Salisbury, had he foreseen such disgrace, had disowned him as a

son. And if there be defeat, and flight, and exile,—wherever thou wanderest, Hastings, shall Katherine be found beside thee—Fare thee well, and Our Lady shield thee—may thy lance be victorious against all foes—save one. Thou wilt forbear my—that is, *the earl!*" And Katherine, softened at that thought, sobbed aloud.

"And come triumph or defeat, I have thy pledge?" said Hastings, soothing her.

"See," said Katherine, taking the broken ring from the casket; "now, for the first time since I bore the name of Bonville, I lay this relic on my heart—art thou answered?"

CHAPTER VI

HASTINGS LEARNS WHAT HAS BEFALLEN SIBYLL—REPAIRS TO THE KING, AND ENCOUNTERS AN OLD RIVAL

"It is destiny," said Hastings to himself, when early the next morning he was on his road to the farm—"It is destiny—and who can resist his fate?"

"It is destiny!"—phrase of the weak human heart! "It is destiny!" dark apology for every error! The strong and the virtuous admit *no* destiny! On earth, guides Conscience—in heaven watches God. And Destiny is but the phantom we invoke to silence the one—to dethrone the other!

Hastings spared not his good steed. With great difficulty had he snatched a brief respite from imperious business, to accomplish the last poor duty now left to him to fulfil—to confront the maid whose heart he had seduced in vain, and say, at length, honestly and

firmly—"I cannot wed thee. Forget me, and farewell."

Doubtless, his learned and ingenious mind conjured up softer words than these, and more purfled periods wherein to dress the iron truth. But in these two sentences the truth lay. He arrived at the farm—he entered the house—he felt it as a reprieve, that he met not the bounding step of the welcoming Sibyll. He sat down in the humble chamber, and waited awhile in patience—no voice was heard. The silence at length surprised and alarmed him. He proceeded farther. He was met by the widowed owner of the house, who was weeping; and her first greeting prepared him for what had chanced. "Oh, my lord, you have come to tell me they are safe—they have not fallen into the hands of their enemies—the good gentleman, so meek—the poor lady, so fair!"

Hastings stood aghast—a few sentences more explained all that he already guessed. A strange man had arrived the evening before at the house, praying Adam and his daughter to accompany him to the Lord Hastings, who had been thrown from his horse, and was now in a cottage in the neighbouring lane—not hurt dangerously, but unable to be removed—and who had urgent matters to communicate. Not questioning the truth of this story, Adam and Sibyll had hurried forth, and returned no more. Alarmed by their long absence, the widow, who had first received the message from the stranger, went herself to the cottage, and found that the story was a fable. Every search had since been made for Adam and his daughter, but in vain. The widow, confirmed in her previous belief that her lodgers had been attainted Lancastrians, could but suppose that they had been thus betrayed

to their enemies. Hastings heard this with a dismay and remorse impossible to express. His only conjecture was, that the king had discovered their retreat, and taken this measure to break off the intercourse he had so sternly denounced. Full of these ideas, he hastily remounted, and stopped not till once more at the gates of the Tower. Hastening to Edward's closet, the moment he saw the king, he exclaimed, in great emotion—"My liege—my liege, do not, at this hour, when I have need of my whole energy to serve thee, do not madden my brain, and palsy my arm. This old man—the poor maid—Sibyll—Warner—speak, my liege—only tell me they are safe—promise me they shall go free, and I swear to obey thee in all else! I will thank thee in the battle-field!"

"Thou art mad, Hastings!" said the king, in great astonishment.—"Hush!" and he glanced significantly at a person who stood before several heaps of gold, ranged upon a table in the recess of the room.—"See," he whispered, "yonder is the goldsmith, who hath brought me a loan from himself and his fellows!—Pretty tales for the city thy folly will send abroad!"

But before Hastings could vent his impatient answer, this person, to Edward's still greater surprise, had advanced from his place, and forgetting all ceremony, had seized Hastings by the hem of his surcoat, exclaiming—

"My lord, my lord—what new horror is this?—Sibyll!—methought she was worthless, and had fled to thee!"

"Ten thousand devils!" shouted the king—"Am I ever to be tormented by that damnable wizard and his witch child? And is it, Sir Peer and Sir Goldsmith, in your king's closet that ye come, the very eve before

he marches to battle, to speer and glower at each other like two madmen as ye are?"

Neither peer nor goldsmith gave way, till the courtier, naturally recovering himself the first, fell on his knee, and said, with firm though profound respect—"Sire, if poor William Hastings has ever merited from the king the kindly thought, one generous word, forgive now whatever may displease thee in his passion or his suit, and tell him what prison contains those whom it would for ever dishonour his knighthood to know punished and endangered but for his offence."

"My lord!" answered the king, softened but still surprised, "think you seriously that I, who but reluctantly, in this lovely month, leave my green lawns of Shene to save a crown, could have been vexing my brain by stratagems to seize a lass—whom I swear by St. George I do not envy thee in the least? If that does not suffice, incredulous dullard, why then take my kingly word, never before passed for so slight an occasion, that I know nothing whatsoever of thy damsel's whereabout—nor her pestilent father's—where they abode of late—where they now be—and, what is more, if any man has usurped his king's right to imprison the king's subjects, find him out, and name his punishment. Art thou convinced?"

"I am, my liege," said Hastings.

"But——" began the goldsmith.

"Holloa, you, too, sir! This is too much! We have condescended to answer the man who arms three thousand retainers——"

"And I, please your highness bring you the gold to pay them," said the trader, bluntly.

The king bit his lip, and then burst into his usual merry laugh.

"Thou art in the right, Master Alwyn. Finish counting the pieces, and then go and consult with my chamberlain—he must off with the cock-crow—but, since ye seem to understand each other, he shall make thee his lieutenant of search, and I will sign any order he pleases for the recovery of the lost wisdom and the stolen beauty. Go and calm thyself, Hastings."

"I will attend you presently, my lord," said Alwyn, aside, "in your own apartment."

"Do so," said Hastings; and, grateful for the king's consideration, he sought his rooms. There, indeed, Alwyn soon joined him, and learned from the nobleman what filled him at once with joy and terror. Knowing that Warner and Sibyll had left the Tower, he had surmised that the girl's virtue had at last succumbed, and it delighted him to hear from Lord Hastings, whose word to men was never questionable, the solemn assurance of her unstained chastity. But he trembled at this mysterious disappearance, and knew not to whom to impute the snare, till the penetration of Hastings suddenly alighted near, at least, to the clue. "The Duchess of Bedford," said he, "ever increasing in superstition as danger increases, may have desired to refind so great a scholar, and reputed an astrologer and magician—if so, all is safe. On the other hand, her favourite, the friar, ever bore a jealous grudge to poor Adam, and may have sought to abstract him from her grace's search—here, there may be molestation to Adam, but surely no danger to Sibyll. Harkye, Alwyn—thou lovest the maid more worthily, and——" Hastings stopped short—for such is infirm human nature, that, though he had mentally resigned Sibyll for ever, he could not yet calmly face the thought of resigning her to a rival. "Thou lovest her," he renewed, more

coldly, "and to thee, therefore, I may safely trust the search, which time, and circumstance, and a soldier's duty forbid to me. And believe—oh, believe, that I say not this from a passion which may move thy jealousy, but rather with a brother's holy love. If thou canst but see her safe, and lodged where nor danger nor wrong can find her, thou hast no friend in the wide world whose service through life thou mayest command like mine."

"My lord," said Alwyn, drily, "I want no friends! Young as I am, I have lived long enough to see that friends follow fortune, but never make it! I will find this poor maid and her honoured father, if I spend my last groat on the search. Get me but such an order from the king as may place the law at my control, and awe even her Grace of Bedford—and I promise the rest!"

Hastings, much relieved, deigned to press the goldsmith's reluctant hand; and, leaving him alone for a few minutes, returned with a warrant from the king, which seemed, to Alwyn, sufficiently precise and authoritative. The goldsmith then departed, and first he sought the friar, but found him not at home. Bungey had taken with him, as was his wont, the keys of his mysterious apartment. Alwyn then hastened elsewhere, to secure those experienced in such a search, and to head it in person. At the Tower, the evening was passed in bustle and excitement—the last preparations for departure. The queen, who was then far advanced towards her confinement, was, as we before said, to remain at the Tower, which was now strongly manned. Roused from her wonted apathy by the imminent dangers that awaited Edward, the night was passed by her in tears and prayers—by him, in the sound sleep of

confident valour. The next morning departed for the north the several leaders—Gloucester, Rivers, Hastings, and the king.

CHAPTER VII

THE LANDING OF LORD WARWICK, AND THE EVENTS THAT ENSUE THEREON

And Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, "prepared such a greate navie as lightly hath not been seene before gathered in manner of all nations, which armie laie at the mouth of the Seyne ready to fight with the Earle of Warwick, when he should set out of his harborowe." *

But the winds fought for the Avenger. In the night came "a terrible tempest," which scattered the duke's ships "one from another, so that two of them were not in compagnie together in one place;" and when the tempest had done its work, it passed away, and the gales were fair, and the heaven was clear. When, the next day, the earl "halsed up the sayles," and came in sight of Dartmouth.

It was not with an army of foreign hirelings that Lord Warwick set forth on his mighty enterprise. Scanty indeed were the troops he brought from France —for he had learned from England that "men, so much daily and hourely desired and wished so sore his arrival and return, that almost all men were in harness, looking for his landyng." † As his ships neared

* Hall, p. 282, ed. 1809.

† The popular feeling in favour of the earl is described by Hall, with somewhat more eloquence and vigour than are common with that homely chronicler:—"The absence of the Earle of Warwick made the common people daily more and

the coast, and the banner of the Ragged Staff, worked in gold, shone in the sun, the shores swarmed with armed crowds, not to resist but to welcome. From cliff to cliff, wide and far, blazed rejoicing bonfires; and from cliff to cliff, wide and far, burst the shout, when, first of all his men, bareheaded, but, save the burgonot, in complete mail, the popular hero leapt to shore.

"When the earle had taken land, he made a proclamation, in the name of King Henry VI., upon high paynes, commanding and charging all men apt or able to bear armour, to prepare themselves to fight against Edward, Duke of York, who had untruly usurped the croune and dignity of this realm." *

And where was Edward?—afar, following the forces of Fitzhugh and Robin of Redesdale, who, by artful retreat, drew him farther and farther northward, and left all the other quarters of the kingdom free, to send their thousands to the banners of Lancaster and Warwick. And even as the news of the earl's landing

more to long, and bee desirous to have the sight of him, and presently to behold his personage. For they judged that the sunne was clerely taken from the world when hee was absent. In such high estimation, amongst the people, was his name, that neither no one manne, they had in so much honour, neither no one persone they so much praised, or to the clouds so highly extolled. What shall I say? His only name sounded in every song, in the mouth of the common people, and his persone [effigies] was represented with great reverence when publique plaies or open triumphes should bee shewed or set furthe abrode in the stretes," &c. This lively passage, if not too highly coloured, serves to show the rude saturnalian kind of liberty that existed, even under a king so vindictive as Edward IV. Though an individual might be hanged for the jest that he would make his son heir to the crown (viz., the grocer's shop, which bore that sign), yet no tyranny could deal with the sentiment of the masses. In our own day it would be much less safe than in that to make public exhibition "in plaies and triumphes," of sympathy with a man attainted as a traitor, and in open rebellion to the crown.

* Hall, p. 32.

reached the king, it spread also through all the towns of the north—and all the towns in the north were in "a great rore, and made fires, and sang songs, crying —'King Henry—King Henry! a Warwicke—a Warwicke!'" But his warlike and presumptuous spirit forsook not the chief of that bloody and fatal race—the line of the English Pelops—"bespattered with kindred gore." * A messenger from Burgundy was in his tent when the news reached him. "Back to the duke!" cried Edward; "tell him to re-collect his navy, guard the sea, scour the streams, that the earl shall not escape, nor return to France—for the doings in England, let me alone! I have ability and puissance to overcome all enemies and rebels in mine own realm." †

And therewith he raised his camp, abandoned the pursuit of Fitzhugh, summoned Montagu to join him (it being now safer to hold the marquis near him, and near the axe, if his loyalty became suspected), and marched on to meet the earl. Nor did the earl tarry from the encounter. His army, swelling as he passed —and as men read his proclamations to reform all grievances and right all wrongs—he pressed on to meet the king, while fast and fast upon Edward's rear came the troops of Fitzhugh and Hilyard; no longer flying but pursuing. The king was the more anxious to come up to Warwick, inasmuch as he relied greatly upon the treachery of Clarence, either secretly to betray or openly to desert the earl. And he knew that if he did the latter on the eve of a battle, it could not fail morally to weaken Warwick, and dishearten his army by fear that desertion should prove, as it ever does, the most contagious disease that can afflict a camp. It is probable, however, that the enthusiasm which had sur-

* Æsch. Agam. † Hall, p. 273.

rounded the earl with volunteers so numerous, had far exceeded the anticipations of the inexperienced Clarence, and would have forbid him that opportunity of betraying the earl. However this be, the rival armies drew near and nearer. The king halted in his rapid march at a small village, and took up his quarters in a fortified house, to which there was no access but by a single bridge.* Edward himself retired for a short time to his couch, for he had need of all his strength in the battle he foresaw. But scarce had he closed his eyes, when Alexander Carlile,† the serjeant of the royal minstrels, followed by Hastings and Rivers (their jealousy laid at rest for a time in the sense of their king's danger), rushed into his room.

"Arm, sire, arm!—Lord Montagu has thrown off the mask, and rides through thy troops, shouting 'Long live King Henry!'"

"Ah, traitor!" cried the king, leaping from his bed. "From Warwick, hate was my due—but not from Montagu! Rivers, help buckle on my mail. Hastings, post my body-guard at the bridge. We will sell our lives dear."

Hastings vanished. Edward had scarcely hurried on his helm, cuirass, and greaves, when Gloucester entered, calm in the midst of peril.

"Your enemies are marching to seize you, brother. Hark! behind you rings the cry, 'A Fitzhugh—a Robin—death to the tyrant!' Hark! in front, 'A Montagu—a Warwick—Long live King Henry!' I come to redeem my word—to share your exile or your death. Choose either while there is yet time. Thy choice is mine!"

And while he spoke, behind, before, came the various

* Sharon Turner, Commes. † Hearne's Fragment.

cries near and nearer. The lion of March was in the toils.

"Now, my two-handed sword!" said Edward. "Gloucester, in this weapon learn my choice!"

But now all the principal barons and captains, still true to the king, whose crown was already lost, flocked in a body to the chamber. They fell on their knees, and with tears implored him to save himself for a happier day.

"There is yet time to escape," said D'Eyncourt—"to pass the bridge—to gain the sea-port! Think not that a soldier's death will be left thee. Numbers will suffice to encumber thine arm—to seize thy person. Live not to be Warwick's prisoner—shown as a wild beast in its cage to the hooting crowd!"

"If not on thyself," exclaimed Rivers, "have pity on these loyal gentlemen, and for the sake of their lives preserve thine own. What is flight? *Warwick fled!*"

"True—*and returned!*" added Gloucester. "You are right, my lords. Come, sire, we must fly. Our rights fly not with us, but shall fight for us in absence!"

The calm WILL of this strange and terrible boy had its effect upon Edward. He suffered his brother to lead him from the chamber, grinding his teeth in impotent rage. He mounted his horse, while Rivers held the stirrup, and, with some six or seven knights and earls, rode to the bridge, already occupied by Hastings and a small but determined guard.

"Come, Hastings," said the king, with a ghastly smile—"they tell us we must fly!"

"True, sire, haste—haste! I stay but to deceive the enemy by feigning to defend the pass, and to counsel, as I best may, the faithful soldiers we leave behind."

"Brave Hastings!" said Gloucester, pressing his

He dashed alone into the very centre of the advanced guard.

hand, "you do well, and I envy you the glory of this post. Come, sire."

"Ay,—ay," said the king, with a sudden and fierce cry, "we go—but at least slaughtering as we go. See! yon rascal troop!—ride we through the midst! Havock and revenge!"

He set spurs to his steed, galloped over the bridge, and, before his companions could join him, dashed alone into the very centre of the advanced guard sent to invest the fortress; and while they were yet shouting—"Where is the tyrant—where is Edward?"

"Here!" answered a voice of thunder—"here, rebels and faytors, in your ranks!"

This sudden and appalling reply, even more than the sweep of the gigantic sword, before which were riven sallet and mail, as the woodman's axe rives the faggot, created amongst the enemy that singular panic, which in those ages often scattered numbers before the arm and the name of one. They recoiled in confusion and dismay. Many actually threw down their arms and fled. Through a path broad and clear, amidst the forest of pikes, Gloucester and the captains followed the flashing track of the king, over the corpses, headless or limbless, that he felled as he rode.

Meanwhile, with a truer chivalry, Hastings, taking advantage of the sortie which confused and delayed the enemy, summoned such of the loyal as were left in the fortress, advised them, as the only chance of life, to affect submission to Warwick; but when the time came, to remember their old allegiance,* and promising that he would not desert them, save with life, till their safety was pledged by the foe, reclosed his visor, and rode back to the front of the bridge.

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii. 289.

And now the king and his comrades had cut their way through all barrier, but the enemy still wavered and lagged, till suddenly the cry of "Robin of Redesdale!" was heard, and sword in hand, Hilyard, followed by a troop of horse, dashed to the head of the besiegers, and, learning the king's escape, rode off in pursuit. His brief presence and sharp rebuke reanimated the falterers, and in a few minutes they gained the bridge.

"Halt, sirs," cried Hastings; "I would offer capitulation to your leader! Who is he?"

A knight on horseback advanced from the rest.

Hastings lowered the point of his sword.

"Sir, we yield this fortress to your hands upon one condition—our men yonder are willing to submit, and shout with you for Henry VI. Pledge me your word that you and your soldiers spare their lives and do them no wrong, and we depart."

"And if I pledge it not?" said the knight.

"Then for every warrior who guards this bridge count ten dead men amongst your ranks."

"Do your worst—our bloods are up! We want life for life!—revenge for the subjects butchered by your tyrant chief! Charge! to the attack—charge! pike and bill!" The knight spurred on, the Lancastrians followed, and the knight reeled from his horse into the moat below, felled by the sword of Hastings.

For several minutes the pass was so gallantly defended that the strife seemed uncertain, though fearfully unequal, when Lord Montagu himself, hearing what had befallen, galloped to the spot, threw down his truncheon, cried "Hold!" and the slaughter ceased. To this nobleman, Hastings repeated the terms he had proposed.

"And," said Montagu, turning with anger to the Lancastrians, who formed a detachment of Fitzhugh's force—"can Englishmen insist upon butchering Englishmen? Rather thank we Lord Hastings, that he would spare good King Henry so many subjects' lives! The terms are granted, my lord; and your own life also, and those of your friends around you, vainly brave in a wrong cause. Depart!"

"Ah, Montagu," said Hastings, touched, and in a whisper, "what pity that so gallant a gentleman should leave a rebel's blot upon his scutcheon."

"When chiefs and suzerains are false and perjured, Lord Hastings," answered Montagu, "to obey them is not loyalty, but serfdom; and revolt is not disloyalty, but a freeman's duty. One day thou mayst know that truth, but too late!" *

Hastings made no reply—waved his hand to his fellow-defenders of the bridge, and, followed by them, went slowly and deliberately on, till clear of the murmuring and sullen foe; then putting spurs to their steeds, these faithful warriors rode fast to rejoin their king; overtook Hilyard on the way, and after a fierce skirmish, a blow from Hastings unhorsed and unhelmed the stalwart Robin, and left him so stunned as to check further pursuit. They at last reached the king, and gaining, with him and his party, the town of Lynn, happily found one English and two Dutch vessels on the point of sailing; without other raiment than the mail they wore—without money, the men, a few hours before hailed as sovereign or as peers, fled from their native land as outcasts and paupers. New dangers beset them on the sea: the ships of the Easter-

* It was in the midst of his own conspiracy against Richard of Gloucester that the head of Lord Hastings fell.

lings, at war both with France and England, bore down upon their vessels. At the risk of drowning, they ran ashore near Alcmaer. The large ships of the Easterlings followed as far as the low water would permit, "intendeing at the fludde to have obtained their prey." * In this extremity, the lord of the province (Louis of Grauthuse) came aboard their vessels—protected the fugitives from the Easterlings—conducted them to the Hague—and apprised the Duke of Burgundy how his brother-in-law had lost his throne. Then were verified Lord Warwick's predictions of the faith of Burgundy! The duke, for whose alliance Edward had dishonoured the man to whom he owed his crown, so feared the victorious earl, that "he had rather have heard of King Edward's death than of his discomfiture." † And his first thought was to send an embassy to the king-maker, praying the amity and alliance of the restored dynasty.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT BEFELL ADAM WARNER AND SIBYLL, WHEN MADE SUBJECT TO THE GREAT FRIAR BUNGEY

We must now return to the Tower of London—not, indeed, to its lordly halls and gilded chambers, but to the room of Friar Bungey. We must go back somewhat in time; and on the day following the departure of the king and his lords, conjure up in that strangely furnished apartment the form of the burly friar, standing before the disorganised Eureka, with Adam Warner by his side.

* Hall. † Ibid., p. 279.

Graul, as we have seen, had kept her word, and Sibyll and her father, having fallen into the snare, were suddenly gagged, bound, led through by-paths to a solitary hut, where a covered wagon was in waiting, and finally, at nightfall, conducted to the Tower. The friar, whom his own repute, jolly affability, and favour with the Duchess of Bedford, made a considerable person with the authorities of the place, had already obtained from the deputy-governor an order to lodge two persons, whom his zeal for the king sought to convict of necromantic practices in favour of the rebellion, in the cells set apart for such unhappy captives. Thither the prisoners were conducted. The friar did not object to their allocation in contiguous cells; and the gaoler deemed him mighty kind and charitable, when he ordered that they might be well served and fed till their examination.

He did not venture, however, to summon his captives till the departure of the king, when the Tower was, in fact, at the disposition of his powerful patroness, and when he thought he might stretch his authority as far as he pleased, unquestioned and unchid.

Now, therefore, on the day succeeding Edward's departure, Adam Warner was brought from his cell, and led to the chamber where the triumphant friar received him in majestic state. The moment Warner entered, he caught sight of the chaos to which his Eureka was resolved, and uttering a cry of mingled grief and joy, sprang forward to greet his profaned treasure. The friar motioned away the gaoler (whispering him to wait without), and they were left alone. Bungey listened with curious and puzzled attention to poor Adam's broken interjections of lamentation and anger, and at last, clapping him roughly on the back, said—

"Thou knowest the secret of this magical and ugly device; but in thy hands it leads only to ruin and perdition. Tell me that secret, and in *my* hands it shall turn to honour and profit. *Porkey verbey!* I am a man of few words. Do this, and thou shalt go free with thy daughter, and I will protect thee, and give thee moneys, and my fatherly blessing;—refuse to do it and thou shalt go from thy snug cell into a black dungeon full of newts and rats, where thou shalt rot till thy nails are like birds' talons, and thy skin shrivelled up into mummy, and covered with hair like Nebuchadnezzar!"

"Miserable varlet! Give *thee* my secret—give *thee* my fame—my life. Never! I scorn and spit at thy malice!"

The friar's face grew convulsed with rage.—"Wretch!" he roared forth, "darest thou unslip thy hound-like malignity upon great Bungey?—Knowest thou not that he could bid the walls open and close upon thee—that he could set yon serpents to coil round thy limbs, and yon lizard to gnaw out thine entrails? Despise not my mercy, and descend to plain sense. What good didst thou ever reap from thy engine?—why shouldst thou lose liberty—nay, life—if I will, for a thing that has cursed thee with man's horror and hate?"

"Art thou Christian and friar to ask me why? Were not Christians themselves hunted by wild beasts, and burned at the stake, and boiled in the caldron for their belief? Knave, whatever is holiest, men ever persecute. Read thy bible!"

"Read the bible!" exclaimed Bungey, in pious horror at such a proposition. "Ah! blasphemer, now I have thee! Thou art a heretic and Lollard. Hollo—there!"

The friar stamped his foot—the door opened; but to his astonishment and dismay appeared, not the grim gaoler, but the Duchess of Bedford herself, preceded by Nicholas Alwyn.

"I told your grace truly—see lady!" cried the goldsmith.—"Vile impostor, where hast thou hidden this wise man's daughter?"

The friar turned his dull, bead-like eyes in vacant consternation, from Nicholas to Adam, from Adam to the duchess.

"Sir friar," said Jacquetta, mildly—for she wished to conciliate the rival seers—"what means this overzealous violation of law? Is it true, as Master Alwyn affirms, that thou hast stolen away and seducted this venerable sage and his daughter—a maid I deemed worthy of a post in my own household?"

"Daughter and lady," said the friar, sullenly, "this ill faytor, I have reason to know, has been practising spells for Lord Warwick and the enemy. I did but summon him hither that my art might undo his charms; and as for his daughter, it seemed more merciful to let her attend him, than to leave her alone and unfriended; specially," added the friar with a grin, "since the poor lord she hath witched is gone to the wars."

"It is true then, wretch, that thou or thy caitiffs have dared to lay hands on a maiden of birth and blood!" exclaimed Alwyn. "Tremble!—see, here, the warrant signed by the king, offering a reward for thy detection, empowering me to give thee up to the laws. By St. Dunstan! but for thy friar's frock, thou shouldst hang."

"Tut—tut, Master Goldsmith," said the duchess, haughtily—"lower thy tone. This holy man is under

my protection, and his fault was but over-zeal. What were this sage's devices and spells?"

"Marry," said the friar, gruffly, "that is what your grace just hindereth my knowing. But he cannot deny that he is a pestilent astrologer, and sends word to the rebels what hours are lucky or fatal for battle and assault."

"Ha!" said the duchess, "he is an astrologer! true, and came nearer to the alchemist's truth than any multiplier that ever served me! My own astrologer is just dead—why died he at such a time? Peace—peace! be there peace between two so learned men. Forgive thy brother, Master Warner!"

Adam had hitherto disdained all participation in this dialogue. In fact, he had returned to the Eureka, and was silently examining if any loss of the vital parts had occurred in its melancholy dismemberment. But now he turned round and said, "Lady, leave the lore of the stars to their great Maker. I forgive this man, and thank your grace for your justice. I claim these poor fragments, and crave your leave to suffer me to depart with my device and my child."

"No—no!" said the duchess, seizing his hand. "Hist! whatever Lord Warwick paid thee, I will double. No time now for alchemy; but for the horoscope, it is the veriest season. I name thee my special astrologer."

"Accept—accept," whispered Alwyn; "for your daughter's sake—for your own—nay, for the Eureka's!"

Adam bowed his head, and groaned forth—"But I go not hence—no, not a foot—unless *this* goes with me. Cruel wretch, how he hath deformed it!"

"And now," cried Alwyn, eagerly, "this wronged and unhappy maiden?"

"Go! be it thine to release and bring her to our presence, good Alwyn," said the duchess; "she shall lodge with her father, and receive all honour. Follow me, Master Warner."

No sooner, however, did the friar perceive that Alwyn had gone in search of the gaoler, than he arrested the steps of the duchess, and said, with the air of a much-injured man—

"May it please your grace to remember, that unless the greater magician have all power, and aid in thwarting the lesser, the lesser can prevail; and therefore, if your grace finds, when too late, that Lord Warwick's or Lord Fitzhugh's arms prosper—that woe and disaster befall the king—say not it was the fault of Friar Bungey! Such things may be. Nathless I shall still sweat, and watch, and toil; and if, despite your unhappy favour and encouragement to this hostile sorcerer, the king *should* beat his enemies, why then, Friar Bungey is not so powerless as your grace holds him. I have said—*Porkey verbey!—Vigilabo et conabo—et perspirabo—et hungerabo—pro vos et vestros, Amen!*"

The duchess was struck by this eloquent appeal; but more and more convinced of the dread science of Adam, by the evident apprehensions of the redoubted Bungey, and firmly persuaded that she could bribe or induce the former to turn a science that would otherwise be hostile into salutary account, she contented herself with a few words of conciliation and compliment, and summoning the attendants who had followed her, bade them take up the various members of the Eureka (for Adam clearly demonstrated that he would not depart without them) and conducted the philosopher to a lofty chamber, fitted up for the defunct astrologer.

Hither, in a short time, Alwyn had the happiness of leading Sibyll, and witnessing the delighted reunion of the child and father. And then, after he had learned the brief details of their abduction, he related how, baffled in all attempt to trace their clue, he had convinced himself that either the duchess or Bungey was the author of the snare, returned to the Tower, shown the king's warrant, learned that an old man and a young female had indeed been admitted into the fortress, and hurried at once to the duchess, who, surprised at his narration and complaint, and anxious to regain the services of Warner, had accompanied him at once to the friar.

"And though," added the goldsmith, "I could indeed procure you lodgings more welcome to ye elsewhere, yet it is well to win the friendship of the duchess, and royalty is ever an ill foe. How came ye to quit the palace?"

Sibyll changed countenance, and her father answered gravely, "We incurred the king's displeasure, and the excuse was the popular hatred of me and the Eureka."

"Heaven made the people, and the devil makes three-fourths of what is popular!" bluntly said the Man of the Middle Class, ever against both extremes.

"And how?" asked Sibyll, "how, honoured and true friend, didst thou obtain the king's warrant, and learn the snare into which we had fallen?"

This time it was Alwyn who changed countenance. He mused a moment, and then frankly answering—"Thou must thank Lord Hastings," gave the explanation already known to the reader.

But the grateful tears this relation called forth from Sibyll, her clasped hands, her evident emotion of delight and love so pained poor Alwyn, that he rose abruptly and took his leave.

And now, the Eureka was a luxury as peremptorily forbid to the astrologer as it had been to the alchemist. Again the true science was despised, and the false cultivated and honoured. Condemned to calculations which, no man (however wise) in that age held altogether delusive, and which yet Adam Warner studied with very qualified belief—it happened by some of those coincidences, which have from time to time appeared to confirm the credulous in judicial astrology, that Adam's predictions became fulfilled. The duchess was prepared for the first tidings, that Edward's foes fled before him. She was next prepared for the very day in which Warwick landed, and then her respect for the astrologer became strangely mingled with suspicion and terror, when she found that he proceeded to foretell but ominous and evil events; and when, at last, still in corroboration of the unhappily too faithful horoscope, came the news of the king's flight, and the earl's march upon London, she fled to Friar Rungey in dismay. And Friar Rungey said—

"Did I not warn you, daughter? Had you suffered me to——"

"True, true!" interrupted the duchess. "Now take, hang, rack, drown, or burn your horrible rival, if you will, but undo the charm, and save us from the earl!"

The friar's eyes twinkled, but to the first thought of spite and vengeance succeeded another; if he who had made the famous waxen effigies of the Earl of Warwick, were now to be found guilty of some atrocious and positive violence upon Master Adam Warner, might not the earl be glad of so good an excuse to put an end to himself?

"Daughter," said the friar at that reflection, and

shaking his head mysteriously and sadly, "daughter, it is too late."

The duchess, in great despair, flew to the queen. Hitherto she had concealed from her royal daughter the employment she had given to Adam; for Elizabeth, who had herself suffered from the popular belief in Jacquetta's sorceries, had of late earnestly besought her to lay aside all practices that could be called into question. Now, however, when she confessed to the agitated and distracted queen the retaining of Adam Warner, and his fatal predictions, Elizabeth, who, from discretion and pride, had carefully hidden from her mother (too vehement to keep a secret) that offence in the king, the memory of which had made Warner peculiarly obnoxious to him, exclaimed, "Unhappy mother, thou hast employed the very man my fated husband would the most carefully have banished from the palace, the very man who could blast his name."

The duchess was aghast and thunder-stricken.

"If ever I forsake Friar Bungey again!" she muttered; "OH, THE GREAT MAN!"

But events which demand a detailed recital now rapidly pressing on, gave the duchess not even the time to seek further explanation of Elizabeth's words, much less to determine the doubt that rose in her enlightened mind whether Adam's spells might not be yet unravelled by the timely execution of the sorcerer!

CHAPTER IX

THE DELIBERATIONS OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL, WHILE LORD WARWICK MARCHES UPON LONDON

It was a clear and bright day in the first week of October, 1470, when the various scouts employed by the mayor and council of London came back to the Guild, at which that worshipful corporation were assembled—their steeds blown and jaded, themselves panting and breathless—to announce the rapid march of the Earl of Warwick. The lord mayor of that year, Richard Lee, grocer and citizen, sat in the venerable hall in a huge leather chair, over which a pall of velvet had been thrown in haste, clad in his robes of state, and surrounded by his aldermen and the magnates of the city. To the personal love which the greater part of the body bore to the young and courteous king, was added the terror which the corporation justly entertained of the Lancastrian faction. They remembered the dreadful excesses which Margaret had permitted to her army in the year 1461—what time, to use the expression of the old historian, "the wealth of London looked pale;" and how grudgingly she had been restrained from condemning her revolted metropolis to the horrors of sack and pillage. And the bearing of this august representation of the trade and power of London was not, at the first, unworthy of the high influence it had obtained. The agitation and disorder of the hour had introduced into the assembly several of the more active and accredited citizens, not of right belonging to it; but they sat, in silent discipline and order, on long benches beyond the table crowded by the

corporate officers. Foremost among these, and remarkable by the firmness and intelligence of his countenance, and the earnest self-possession with which he listened to his seniors, was Nicholas Alwyn, summoned to the council from his great influence with the apprentices and younger freemen of the city.

As the last scout announced his news, and was gravely dismissed, the lord mayor rose; and being, perhaps, a better educated man than many of the haughtiest barons, and having more at stake than most of them, his manner and language had a dignity and earnestness which might have reflected honour on the higher court of parliament.

"Brethren and citizens," he said, with the decided brevity of one who felt it no time for many words, "in two hours we shall hear the clarions of Lord Warwick at our gates; in two hours we shall be summoned to give entrance to an army assembled in the name of King Henry. I have done my duty—I have manned the walls—I have marshalled what soldiers we can command. I have sent to the deputy-governor of the Tower——"

"And what answer gives he, my lord mayor?" interrupted Humfrey Heyford.

"None to depend upon. He answers that Edward IV., in abdicating the kingdom, has left him no power to resist; and that between force and force, king and king, might makes right."

A deep breath, like a groan, went through the assembly.

Up rose Master John Stokton, the mercer. He rose, trembling from limb to limb.

"Worshipful my lord mayor," said he, "it seems to me that our first duty is to look to our own selves!"

Despite the gravity of the emergence, a laugh burst forth, and was at once silenced, at this frank avowal.

"Yes," continued the mercer, turning round, and striking the table with his fist, in the action of a nervous man—"yes; for King Edward has set us the example. A stout and a dauntless champion, whose whole youth has been war, King Edward has fled from the kingdom—King Edward takes care of himself—it is our duty to do the same!"

Strange though it may seem, this homely selfishness went at once through the assembly like a flash of conviction. There was a burst of applause, and, as it ceased, the sullen explosion of a bombard (or cannon) from the city wall announced that the warder had caught the first glimpse of the approaching army.

Master Stokton started as if the shot had gone near to himself, and dropped at once into his seat ejaculating, "The Lord have mercy upon us!" There was a pause of a moment, and then several of the corporation rose simultaneously. The mayor, preserving his dignity, fixed on the sheriff.

"Few words, my lord, and I have done," said Richard Gardyner—"there is no fighting without men. The troops at the Tower are not to be counted on. The populace are all with Lord Warwick, even though he brought the devil at his back. If you hold out, look to rape and plunder before sunset to-morrow. If ye yield, go forth in a body, and the earl is not the man to suffer one Englishman to be injured in life or health who once trusts to his good faith. My say is said."

"Worshipful my lord," said a thin, cadaverous alderman, who rose next—"this is a judgment of the Lord and His saints. The Lollards and heretics have been too much suffered to run at large, and the wrath of Heaven is upon us."

An impatient murmuring attested the unwillingness of the larger part of the audience to listen further; but an approving buzz from the elder citizens announced that the fanaticism was not without its favourers. Thus stimulated and encouraged, the orator continued; and concluded an harangue, interrupted more stormily than all that had preceded, by an exhortation to leave the city to its fate, and to march in a body to the New Prison, draw forth five suspected Lollards, and burn them at Smithfield, in order to appease the Almighty and divert the tempest!

This subject of controversy once started, might have delayed the audience till the ragged staves of the Warwickers drove them forth from their hall, but for the sagacity and promptitude of the mayor.

"Brethren," he said, "it matters not to me whether the counsel suggested be good or bad, on the main; but this have I heard,—there is small safety in death-bed repentance. It is too late now to do, through fear of the devil, what we omitted to do through zeal for the church. The sole question is, 'Fight or make terms.' Ye say we lack men—verily, yes, while no leaders are found! Walworth, my predecessor, saved London from Wat Tyler. Men were wanting *then* till the mayor and his fellow-citizens marched forth to Mile End. It may be the same now. Agree to fight, and we'll try it—what say you, Nicholas Alwyn?—you know the temper of our young men."

Thus called upon, Alwyn rose, and such was the good name he had already acquired, that every murmur hushed into eager silence.

"My lord mayor," he said, "there is a proverb in my country which says, 'Fish swim best that's bred in the sea;' which means, I take it, that men do best what

they are trained for! Lord Warwick and his men are trained for fighting. Few of the fish about London Bridge are bred in *that* sea. Cry, 'London to the rescue!'—put on hauberk and helm, and you will have crowns enough to crack around you. What follows?—Master Stokton hath said it: pillage and rape for the city—gibbet and cord for mayor and aldermen. Do I say this, loving the house of Lancaster? No; as Heaven shall judge me, I think that the policy King Edward hath chosen, and which costs him his crown to-day, ought to make the house of York dear to burgess and trader. He hath sought to break up the iron rule of the great barons—and never peace to England till that be done. He has failed; but for a day. He has yielded for the time; so must we. 'There's a time to squint, and a time to look even.' I advise that we march out to the earl—that we make honourable terms for the city—that we take advantage of one faction to gain what we have not gained with the other—that we fight for our profit, not with swords where we shall be worsted, but in council and parliament, by speech and petition. New power is ever gentle and douce. What matters to us, York or Lancaster?—all we want is good laws. Get the best we can from Lancaster—and when King Edward returns, as return he will, let him bid higher than Henry for our love. Worshipful my lords and brethren, while barons and knaves go to loggerheads, honest men get their own. Time grows under us like grass. York and Lancaster may pull down each other—and what is left? Why, three things that thrive in all weather—London, Industry, and the people! We have fallen on a rough time. Well, what says the proverb? 'Boil stones in butter, and you may sup the broth.' I have done."

This characteristic harangue, which was fortunate enough to accord with the selfishness of each one, and yet give the manly excuse of sound sense and wise policy to all, was the more decisive in its effect, inasmuch as the young Alwyn, from his own determined courage, and his avowed distaste to the Lancaster faction, had been expected to favour warlike counsels. The mayor himself, who was faithfully and personally attached to Edward, with a deep sigh, gave way to the feeling of the assembly. And the resolution being once come to, Henry Lee was the first to give it whatever advantage could be derived from prompt and speedy action.

"Go we forth at once," said he—"go, as becomes us, in our robes of state, and with the insignia of the city. Never be it said that the guardians of the city of London could neither defend with spirit, nor make terms with honour. We give entrance to Lord Warwick. Well, then, it must be our own free act. Come! Officers of our court, advance."

"Stay a bit—stay a bit," whispered Stokton, digging sharp claws into Alwyn's arm—"let them go first,—a word with you, cunning Nick—a word."

Master Stokton, despite the tremor of his nerves, was a man of such wealth and substance, that Alwyn might well take the request, thus familiarly made, as a compliment not to be received discourteously; moreover, he had his own reasons for hanging back from a procession which his rank in the city did not require him to join.

While, therefore, the mayor and the other dignitaries left the hall, with as much state and order as if not going to meet an invading army, but to join a holiday festival, Nicholas and Stokton lingered behind.

"Master Alwyn," said Stokton, then, with a sly wink of his eye, "you have this day done yourself great credit; you will rise—I have my eye on you! I have a daughter—I have a daughter! Aha! a lad like you may come to great things!"

"I am much bounden to you, Master Stokton," returned Alwyn, somewhat abstractedly—"but what's your will?"

"My will!—hum, I say, Nicholas, what's your advice? Quite right not to go to blows. Odds costards! that mayor is a very tiger! But don't you think it would be wiser not to join this procession? Edward IV., an he ever come back, has a long memory. He deals at my ware, too—a good customer at a mercer's; and, Lord! how much money he owes the city!—hum—I would not seem ungrateful."

"But, if you go not out with the rest, there be other mercers who will have King *Henry's* countenance and favour; and it is easy to see that a new court will make vast consumption in mercery."

Master Stokton looked puzzled.

"That were a hugeous pity, good Nicholas; and, certes, there is Wat Smith, in Eastgate, who would cheat that good King Henry, poor man! which were a shame to the city; but, on the other hand, the Yorkists mostly pay on the nail (except King Edward, God save him!), and the Lancastrians are as poor as mice. Moreover, King Henry is a meek man, and does not avenge—King Edward, a hot and a stern man, and may call it treason to go with the Red Rose! I wish I knew how to decide! I have a daughter, an only daughter—a buxom lass, and well dowered. I would I had a sharp son-in-law to advise me!"

"Master Stokton, in one word, then, he never goes

far wrong who can run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Good day to you, I have business elsewhere."

So saying, Nicholas, rather hastily, shook off the mercer's quivering fingers, and hastened out of the hall.

"Verily," murmured the disconsolate Stokton, "run with the hare, quotha!—that is, go with King Edward; but hunt with the hounds—that is, go with King Henry. Odds costards; it's not so easily done by a plain man, not bred in the north. I'd best go—home, and do nothing!"

With that, musing and bewildered, the poor man sneaked out, and was soon lost amidst the murmuring, gathering, and swaying crowds, many amongst which were as much perplexed as himself.

In the meanwhile, with his cloak muffled carefully round his face, and with a long, stealthy, gliding stride, Alwyn made his way through the streets, gained the river, entered a boat in waiting for him, and arrived at last at the palace of the Tower.

CHAPTER X

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF THE EARL—THE ROYAL CAPTIVE IN THE TOWER—THE MEETING BETWEEN KING-MAKER AND KING

All in the chambers of the metropolitan fortress exhibited the greatest confusion and dismay. The sentinels, it is true, were still at their posts, men-at-arms at the outworks, the bombards were loaded, the flag of Edward IV. still waved aloft from the battlements; but the officers of the fortress and the captains of its

soldiery were, some assembled in the old hall, pale with fear, and wrangling with each other; some had fled, none knew whither; some had gone avowedly and openly to join the invading army.

Through this tumultuous and feeble force, Nicholas Alwyn was conducted by a single faithful servitor of the queen's (by whom he was expected); and one glance of his quick eye, as he passed along, convinced him of the justice of his counsels. He arrived at last, by a long and winding stair, at one of the loftiest chambers, in one of the loftiest towers, usually appropriated to the subordinate officers of the household.

And there, standing by the open casement, commanding some extended view of the noisy and crowded scene beyond, both on stream and land, he saw the queen of the fugitive monarch. By her side was the Lady Scrope, her most familiar friend and confidant —her three infant children, Elizabeth, Mary, and Cicely —grouped round her knees, playing with each other, and unconscious of the terrors of the times; and apart from the rest stood the Duchess of Bedford, conferring eagerly with Friar Bungey, whom she had summoned in haste, to know if his art could not yet prevail over enemies merely mortal.

The servitor announced Alwyn, and retired; the queen turned—"What news, Master Alwyn? Quick! What tidings from the lord mayor?"

"Gracious my queen and lady," said Alwyn, falling on his knees—"you have but one course to pursue. Below yon casement lies your barge—to the right, see the round grey tower of Westminster Sanctuary; you have time yet, and but time!"

The old Duchess of Bedford turned her sharp, bright, grey eyes from the pale and trembling friar to the

goldsmith, but was silent. The queen stood aghast!—"Mean you," she faltered at last, "that the city of London forsakes the king? Shame on the cravens!"

"Not cravens, my lady and queen," said Alwyn, rising. "He must have iron nails that scratches a bear—and the white bear above all. The king has fled—the barons have fled—the soldiers have fled—the captains have fled—the citizens of London alone fly not; but there is nothing, save life and property, left to guard."

"Is this thy boasted influence with the commons and youths of the city?"

"My humble influence, may it please your grace (I say it now openly, and I will say it a year hence, when King Edward will hold his court in these halls once again), my influence, such as it is, has been used to save lives, which resistance would waste in vain. Alack, alack! 'No gaping against an oven,' gracious lady! Your barge is below. Again I say, there is yet time—when the bell tolls the next hour, that time will be past!"

"Then Jesu defend these children!" said Elizabeth, bending over her infants, and weeping bitterly—"I will go!"

"Hold!" said the Duchess of Bedford, "men desert us—but do the spirits also forsake?—Speak, friar! canst thou yet do aught for us?—and if not, thinkest thou it is the right hour to yield and fly?"

"Daughter," said the friar, whose terror might have moved pity—"as I said before, thank yourself. This Warner, this—in short, the lesser magician, hath been aided and cockered to countervail the greater, as I forewarned. Fly! run! fly! Verily; and indeed, it is the properest of all times to save ourselves; and the stars and the book, and my familiar, all call out—'Off and away!'"

"'Fore heaven!" exclaimed Alwyn, who had hitherto been dumb with astonishment at this singular interlude—"sith he who hath shipped the devil must make the best of him, thou art for once an honest man, and a wise counsellor. Hark! the second gun! The earl is at the gates of the city!"

The queen lingered no longer—she caught her youngest child in her arms; the Lady Scrope followed with the two others—"Come, follow, quick, Master Alwyn," said the duchess, who, now that she was compelled to abandon the world of prediction and soothsaying, became thoroughly the sagacious, plotting, ready woman of this life—"Come, your face and name will be of service to us, an we meet with obstruction."

Before Alwyn could reply, the door was thrown abruptly open, and several of the officers of the household rushed pell-mell into the royal presence.

"Gracious queen!" cried many voices at once, each with a different sentence of fear and warning—"Fly! —We cannot depend on the soldiers—the populace are up—they shout for King Henry—Dr. Godard is preaching against you at St. Paul's Cross—Sir Geoffrey Gates has come out of the sanctuary, and with him all the miscreants and outlaws—the mayor is now with the rebels! Fly!—the sanctuary—the sanctuary!"

"And who amongst you is of highest rank?" asked the duchess, calmly; for Elizabeth, completely overwhelmed, seemed incapable of speech or movement.

"I, Giles de Malvoisin, knight banneret," said an old warrior, armed cap-a-pie, who had fought in France under the hero Talbot.

"Then, sir," said the duchess, with majesty, "to your hands I confide the eldest daughter of your king. Lead on!—we follow you. Elizabeth, lean on me."

With this, supporting Elizabeth, and leading her second grandchild, the duchess left the chamber.

The friar followed amidst the crowd, for well he knew that if the soldiers of Warwick once caught hold of him, he had fared about as happily as the fox amidst the dogs; and Alwyn, forgotten in the general confusion, hastened to Adam's chamber.

The old man, blessing any cause that induced his patroness to dispense with his astrological labours and restored him to the care of his Eureka, was calmly and quietly employed in repairing the mischief effected by the bungling friar. And Sibyll, who at the first alarm had flown to his retreat, joyfully hailed the entrance of the friendly goldsmith.

Alwyn was indeed perplexed what to advise, for the principal sanctuary would, no doubt, be crowded by ruffians of the worst character; and the better lodgments which that place, a little town in itself,* contained, be already preoccupied by the Yorkists of rank; and the smaller sanctuaries were still more liable to the same objection. Moreover, if Adam should be recognised by any of the rabble that would meet them by the way, his fate, by the summary malice of a mob, was certain. After all, the Tower would be free from the populace; and as soon as, by a few rapid questions, Alwyn learned from Sibyll that she had reason to hope her father would find protection with Lord Warwick, and called to mind that Marmaduke Nevile was necessarily in the earl's train, he advised them to remain quiet and concealed in their apartments, and promised to see and provide for them the moment the Tower was yielded up to the new government.

The counsel suited both Sibyll and Warner. In-

* The Sanctuary of Westminster was fortified.

deed, the philosopher could not very easily have been induced to separate himself again from the beloved Eureka; and Sibyll was more occupied at that hour with thoughts and prayers for the beloved Hastings,—afar—a wanderer and an exile,—than with the turbulent events amidst which her lot was cast.

In the storms of a revolution which convulsed a kingdom and hurled to the dust a throne, Love saw but a single object—Science but its tranquil toil. Beyond the realm of men lies ever with its joy and sorrow, its vicissitude and change, the domain of the human heart. In the revolution, the toy of the scholar was restored to him; in the revolution, the maiden mourned her lover. In the movement of the mass, each unit hath its separate passion. The blast that rocks the tree, shakes a different world in every leaf!

CHAPTER XI

THE TOWER IN COMMOTION

On quitting the Tower, Alwyn regained the boat, and took his way to the city; and here, whatever credit that worthy and excellent personage may lose in certain eyes, his historian is bound to confess that his anxiety for Sibyll did not entirely distract his attention from interest or ambition. To become the head of his class, to rise to the first honours of his beloved city of London, had become to Nicholas Alwyn a hope and aspiration which made as much a part of his being as glory to a warrior, power to a king, an Eureka to a scholar; and though more mechanically than with any sordid calculation or self-seeking, Nicholas Alwyn

repaired to his Ware in the Chepe. The streets, when he landed, already presented a different appearance from the disorder and tumult noticeable when he had before passed them. The citizens now had decided what course to adopt; and though the shops, or rather booths, were carefully closed, streamers of silk, cloth of arras and gold, were hung from the upper casements; the balconies were crowded with holiday gazers; the fickle populace (the same herd that had hooted the meek Henry, when led to the Tower) were now shouting, "A Warwick!" "A Clarence!" and pouring, throng after throng, to gaze upon the army, which, with the mayor and aldermen, had already entered the city. Having seen to the security of his costly goods, and praised his apprentices duly for their care of his interests, and their abstinence from joining the crowd, Nicholas then repaired to the upper story of his house, and set forth from his casements and balcony the richest stuffs he possessed. However, there was his own shrewd, sarcastic smile on his firm lips, as he said to his apprentices, "When these are done with, lay them carefully by against Edward of York's re-entry."

Meanwhile, preceded by trumpets, drums, and heralds, the Earl of Warwick and his royal son-in-law rode into the shouting city. Behind came the litter of the Duchess of Clarence, attended by the earl of Oxford, Lord Fitzhugh, the Lords Stanley and Shrewsbury, Sir Robert de Lytton, and a princely cortège of knights, squires, and nobles; while, file upon file, rank upon rank, followed the long march of the unresisted armament.

Warwick, clad in complete armour of Milan steel —save the helmet, which was borne behind him by

his squire,—mounted on his own noble Saladin, preserved upon a countenance so well suited to command the admiration of a populace, the same character as heretofore, of manly majesty and lofty frankness. But to a nearer and more searching gaze than was likely to be bent upon him in such an hour, the dark deep traces of care, anxiety, and passion might have been detected in the lines which now thickly intersected the forehead, once so smooth and furrowless; and his kingly eye, not looking, as of old, right forward as he moved, cast unquiet, searching glances about him and around, as he bowed his bare head from side to side of the welcoming thousands.

A far greater change, to outward appearance, was visible in the fair young face of the Duke of Clarence. His complexion, usually sanguine and blooming, like his elder brother's, was now little less pale than that of Richard. A sullen, moody, discontented expression, which not all the heartiness of the greetings he received could dispel, contrasted forcibly with the good-humoured laughing recklessness, which had once drawn a "God bless him!" from all on whom rested his light-blue joyous eye. He was unarmed, save by a corslet richly embossed with gold. His short manteline of crimson velvet, his hosen of white cloth laced with gold, and his low horseman's boots of Spanish leather curiously carved and broidered, with long golden spurs, his plumed and jewelled cap, his white charger with housings enriched with pearls and blazing with cloth of gold, his broad collar of precious stones, with the order of St. George; his general's truncheon raised aloft, and his Plantagenet banner borne by the herald over his royal head, caught the eyes of the crowd, only the more to rivet them on an

aspect ill fitting the triumph of a bloodless victory. At his left hand, where the breadth of the streets permitted, rode Henry Lee, the mayor, uttering no word, unless appealed to, and then answering but with chilling reverence and dry monosyllables.

A narrow winding in the streets, which left Warwick and Clarence alone side by side, gave the former the opportunity he had desired.

"How, prince and son," he said in a hollow whisper, "is it with this brow of care that thou saddenest our conquest, and enterest the capital we gain without a blow?"

"By St. George!" answered Clarence, sullenly, and in the same tone; "thinkest thou it chafes not the son of Richard of York, after such toils and bloodshed, to minister to the dethronement of his kin and the restoration of the foe of his race?"

"Thou shouldst have thought of that before," returned Warwick, but with sadness and pity in the reproach.

"Ay, before Edward of Lancaster was made my lord and brother," retorted Clarence, bitterly.

"Hush!" said the earl, "and calm thy brow. Not thus didst thou speak at Amboise; either thou wert then less frank or more generous. But regrets are vain: we have raised the whirlwind, and must rule it."

And with that, in the action of a man who would escape his own thoughts, Warwick made his black steed demivolte; and the crowd shouted again the louder at the earl's gallant horsemanship, and Clarence's dazzling collar of jewels.

While thus the procession of the victors, the nominal object of all this mighty and sudden revolution—of this stir and uproar—of these shining arms and flaunt-

ing banners,—of this heaven or hell in the deep passions of men—still remained in his prison-chamber of the Tower, a true type of the thing factions contend for; absent, insignificant, unheeded, and, save by a few of the leaders and fanatical priests, absolutely forgotten!

To this solitary chamber we are now transported; yet solitary is a word of doubtful propriety; for though the royal captive was alone, so far as the human species make up a man's companionship and solace—though the faithful gentlemen, Manning, Bedle, and Allerton, had, on the news of Warwick's landing, been thrust from his chamber, and were now in the ranks of his new and strange defenders, yet power and jealousy had not left his captivity all forsaken. There was still the starling in its cage, and the fat, asthmatic spaniel still wagged its tail at the sound of its master's voice, or the rustle of his long gown. And still from the ivory crucifix gleamed the sad and holy face of the God—present alway—and who, by faith and patience, linketh evermore grief to joy—but earth to heaven.

The august prisoner had not been so utterly cut off from all knowledge of the outer life as to be ignorant of some unwonted and important stir in the fortress and the city. The squire who had brought him his morning meal had been so agitated as to excite the captive's attention, and had then owned that the Earl of Warwick had proclaimed Henry king, and was on his march to London. But neither the squire nor any of the officers of the Tower dared release the illustrious captive, nor even remove him as yet to the state apartments vacated by Elizabeth. They knew not what might be the pleasure of the stout earl or the Duke of Clarence, and feared over-officiousness might be their

worst crime. But naturally imagining that Henry's first command, at the new position of things, might be for liberty, and perplexed whether to yield or refuse, they absented themselves from his summons, and left the whole Tower in which he was placed actually deserted.

From his casement the king could see, however, the commotion, and the crowds upon the wharf and river, with the gleam of arms and banners;—and hear the sounds of "A Warwick!" "A Clarence!" "Long live good Henry VI.!" A strange combination of names, which disturbed and amazed him much! But by degrees, the unwonted excitement of perplexity and surprise settled back into the calm serenity of his most gentle mind and temper. That trust in an all-directing Providence, to which he had schooled himself, had (if we may so say with reverence) driven his beautiful soul into the opposite error, so fatal to the affairs of life; the error that deadens and benumbs the energy of free will and the noble alertness of active duty. Why strain and strive for the things of this world? God would order all for the best. Alas! God hath placed us in this world, each, from king to peasant, with nerves, and hearts, and blood, and passions to struggle with our kind; and, no matter how heavenly the goal, to labour with the million in the race!

"Forsooth," murmured the king, as, his hands clasped behind him, he paced slowly to and fro the floor, "this ill world seemeth but a feather, blown about by the winds, and never to be at rest. Hark! Warwick and King Henry—the lion and the lamb! Alack, and we are fallen on no Paradise, where such union were not a miracle! Foolish bird!"—and with a pitying smile upon that face whose holy sweetness

might have disarmed a fiend, he paused before the cage and contemplated his fellow-captive—"Foolish bird, the uneasiness and turmoil without have reached even to thee. Thou beatest thy wings against the wires—thou turnest thy bright eyes to mine restlessly. Why? Pantest thou to be free, silly one, that the hawk may swoop on its defenceless prey? Better, perhaps, the cage for thee, and the prison for thy master. Well—out if thou wilt! Here at least thou art safe!" and opening the cage the starling flew to his bosom, and nestled there, with its small clear voice mimicking the human sound.

"Poor Henry—poor Henry! Wicked men—poor Henry!"

The king bowed his meek head over his favourite, and the fat spaniel, jealous of the monopolised caress, came waddling towards its master, with a fond whine, and looked up at him with eyes that expressed more of faith and love than Edward of York, the ever wooing and ever wooed, had read in the gaze of woman.

With those companions, and with thoughts growing more and more composed and rapt from all that had roused and vexed his interest in the forenoon, Henry remained till the hour had long passed for his evening meal. Surprised at last by a negligence which (to do his gaolers justice) had never before occurred, and finding no response to his hand-bell—no attendant in the anteroom—the outer doors locked as usual—but the sentinel's tread in the court below, hushed and still, a cold thrill for a moment shot through his blood. "Was he left for hunger to do its silent work!" Slowly he bent his way from the outer rooms back to his chamber; and, as he passed the casement again, he

heard, though far in the distance, through the dim air of the deepening twilight, the cry of "Long live King Henry!"

This devotion without—this neglect within, was a wondrous contrast! Meanwhile the spaniel, with that instinct of fidelity which divines the wants of the master, had moved snuffling and smelling, round and round the chambers, till it stopped and scratched at a cupboard in the anteroom, and then with a joyful bark flew back to the king, and taking the hem of his gown between its teeth, led him towards the spot it had discovered; and there, in truth, a few of those small cakes, usually served up for the night's livery, had been carelessly left. They sufficed for the day's food, and the king, the dog, and the starling shared them peacefully together. This done, Henry carefully replaced his bird in its cage, bade the dog creep to the hearth and lie still; passed on to his little oratory, with the relics of cross and saint strewed around the solemn image,—and in prayer forgot the world! Meanwhile darkness set in: the streets had grown deserted, save where in some nooks and by-lanes gathered groups of the soldiery; but for the most part the discipline in which Warwick held his army, had dismissed those stern loiterers to the various quarters provided for them, and little remained to remind the peaceful citizens that a throne had been uprooted, and a revolution consummated, that eventful day. It was at this time that a tall man, closely wrapped in his large horseman's cloak, passed alone through the streets, and gained the Tower. At the sound of his voice by the great gate, the sentinel started in alarm; a few moments more, and all left to guard the fortress were gathered round him. From these he singled out one of the squires who

usually attended Henry, and bade him light his steps to the king's chamber. As in that chamber Henry rose from his knees, he saw the broad red light of a torch flickering under the chinks of the threshold; he heard the slow tread of approaching footsteps, the spaniel uttered a low growl, its eyes sparkling,—the door opened, and the torch borne behind by the squire, and raised aloft so that its glare threw a broad light over the whole chamber, brought into full view the dark and haughty countenance of the Earl of Warwick.

The squire, at a gesture from the earl, lighted the sconces on the wall, the tapers on the table, and quickly vanished. King-maker and king were alone! At the first sight of Warwick, Henry had turned pale, and receded a few paces, with one hand uplifted in adjuration or command, while with the other he veiled his eyes—whether that this startled movement came from the weakness of bodily nerves, much shattered by sickness and confinement, or from the sudden emotions called forth by the aspect of one who had wrought him calamities so dire. But the craven's terror in the presence of a living foe was, with all his meekness, all his holy abhorrence of wrath and warfare, as unknown to that royal heart as to the high blood of his Hero-sire. And so, after a brief pause, and a thought that took the shape of prayer, not for safety from peril, but for grace to forgive the past, Henry VI. advanced to Warwick, who still stood dumb by the threshold, combating with his own mingled and turbulent emotions of pride and shame, and said, in a voice majestic even from its very mildness—

"What tale of new woe and evil hath the Earl of Salisbury and Warwick come to announce to the poor captive who was once a king?"

"Forgive me! Forgiveness, Henry, my lord—Forgiveness!" exclaimed Warwick, falling on his knee. The meek reproach—the touching words—the mien and visage altered, since last beheld, from manhood into age—the grey hairs and bended form of the king, went at once to that proud heart; and as the earl bent over the wan, thin hand, resigned to his lips, a tear upon its surface out-sparkled all the jewels that it wore.

"Yet no," continued the earl (impatient as proud men are, to hurry from repentance to atonement, for the one is of humiliation and the other of pride),—"yet no, my liege—not now do I crave thy pardon. No; but when begirt, in the halls of thine ancestors, with the peers of England, the victorious banner of St. George waving above the throne which thy servant hath rebuilt—then, when the trumpets are sounding thy rights without the answer of a foe—then, when from shore to shore of fair England the shout of thy people echoes to the vault of heaven—*then* will Warwick kneel again to King Henry, and sue for the pardon he hath not ignobly won!"

"Alack, sir," said the king, with accents of mournful yet half-reproving kindness, "it was not amidst trumps and banners that the Son of God set mankind the exemplar and pattern of charity to foes. When thy hand struck the spurs from my heel—when thou didst parade me through the hooting crowd to this solitary cell, *then*, Warwick, I forgave thee, and prayed to heaven for pardon for *thee*, if thou didst wrong me—*for myself*, if a king's fault had deserved a subject's harshness. Rise, sir earl; our God is a jealous God, and the attitude of worship is for Him alone."

Warwick rose from his knee; and the king perceiving and compassionating the struggle which shook the

strong man's breast, laid his hand on the earl's shoulder, and said—"Peace be with thee!—thou hast done me no real harm. I have been as happy in these walls as in the green parks of Windsor; happier than in the halls of state, or in the midst of wrangling armies. What tidings now?"

"My liege, is it possible that you know not that Edward is a fugitive and a beggar, and that Heaven hath permitted me to avenge at once your injuries and my own? This day, without a blow, I have regained your city of London; its streets are manned with my army. From the council of peers, and warriors, and prelates, assembled at my house, I have stolen hither alone and in secret, that I might be the first to hail your grace's restoration to the throne of Henry V."

The king's face so little changed at this intelligence, that its calm sadness almost enraged the impetuous Warwick, and with difficulty he restrained from giving utterance to the thought—"He is not worthy of a throne who cares so little to possess it."

"Well-a-day!" said Henry, sighing, "Heaven then hath sore trials yet in store for mine old age! Tray—Tray!" and stooping, he gently patted his dog, who kept watch at his feet, still glaring suspiciously at Warwick—"We are both too old for the chase now!—Will you be seated, my lord?"

"Trust me," said the earl, as he obeyed the command, having first set chair and footstool for the king, who listened to him with downcast eyes and his head drooping on his bosom—"trust me, your later days, my liege, will be free from the storms of your youth. All chance of Edward's hostility is expired. Your alliance, though I seem boastful so to speak—your alliance with one in whom the people can confide for

some skill in war, and some more profound experience of the habits and tempers of your subjects than your former councillors could possess, will leave your honoured leisure free for the holy meditations it affects; and your glory, as your safety, shall be the care of men who can awe this rebellious world."

"Alliance!" said the king, who had caught but that one word. "Of what speakest thou, sir earl?"

"These missives will explain all, my liege. This letter from my lady the Queen Margaret, and this from your gracious son, the Prince of Wales."

"Edward! my Edward!" exclaimed the king, with a father's burst of emotion. "Thou hast seen him, then?—bears he his health well?—is he of cheer and heart?"

"He is strong and fair, and full of promise, and brave as his grandsire's sword."

"And knows he—knows he well, that we all are the potter's clay in the hands of God?"

"My liege," said Warwick, embarrassed, "he has as much devotion as befits a Christian knight and a goodly prince."

"Ah!" sighed the king, "ye men of arms have strange thoughts on these matters;" and cutting the silk of the letters, he turned from the warrior. Shading his face with his hand, the earl darted his keen glance on the features of the king, as, drawing near to the table, the latter read the communications which announced his new connection with his ancient foe.

But Henry was at first so affected by the sight of Margaret's well-known hand, that he thrice put down her letter, and wiped the moisture from his eyes.

"My poor Margaret, how thou hast suffered!" he murmured; "these very characters are less firm and

bold than they were. Well—well!" and at last he betook himself resolutely to the task. Once or twice his countenance changed, and he uttered an exclamation of surprise. But the proposition of a marriage between Prince Edward and the Lady Anne did not revolt his forgiving mind, as it had the haughty and stern temper of his consort. And when he had concluded his son's epistle, full of the ardour of his love and the spirit of his youth, the king passed his left hand over his brow, and then extending his right to Warwick, said, in accents which trembled with emotion—"Serve *my* son—since he is *thine,* too; give peace to this distracted kingdom—repair my errors—press not hard upon those who contend against us, and Jesu and his saints will bless this bond!"

The earl's object, perhaps, in seeking a meeting with Henry, so private and unwitnessed, had been, that none, not even his brother, might hearken to the reproaches he anticipated to receive, or say hereafter that he heard Warwick, returned as victor and avenger to his native land, descend, in the hour of triumph, to extenuation and excuse. So affronted, imperilled, or to use his own strong word, "so *despaired,*" had he been in the former rule of Henry, that his intellect, which, however vigorous in his calmer moods, was liable to be obscured and dulled by his passions, had half confounded the gentle king with his ferocious wife and stern councillors, and he had thought he never could have humbled himself to the *man,* even so far as knighthood's submission to Margaret's sex had allowed him to the woman. But the sweetness of Henry's manners and disposition—the saint-like dignity which he had manifested throughout this painful interview, and the touching grace and trustful gen-

erosity of his last words—words which consummated the earl's large projects of ambition and revenge, had that effect upon Warwick which the preaching of some holy man, dwelling upon the patient sanctity of the Saviour had of old on a grim Crusader, all incapable himself of practising such meek excellence, and yet all-moved and penetrated by its loveliness in another; and, like such Crusader, the representation of all mildest and most forgiving singularly stirred up in the warrior's mind images precisely the reverse—images of armed valour and stern vindication, as if where the Cross was planted, sprang from the earth the standard and the war-horse!

"Perish your foes! May war and storm scatter them as the chaff! My liege, my royal master," continued the earl, in a deep, low, faltering voice. "Why knew I not thy holy and princely heart before? Why stood so many between Warwick's devotion and a king so worthy to command it? How poor, beside thy great-hearted fortitude and thy Christian heroism, seems the savage valour of false Edward! Shame upon one who can betray the trust thou hast placed in him. Never will I! Never! I swear it! No! though all England desert thee, I will stand alone with my breast of mail before thy throne! Oh, would that my triumph had been less peaceful and less bloodless! would that a hundred battle-fields were yet left to prove how deeply—deeply in his heart of hearts—Warwick feels the forgiveness of his king!"

"Not so—not so—not so; not *battle-fields,* Warwick!" said Henry. "Ask not to serve the king by shedding one subject's blood."

"Your pious will be obeyed!" replied Warwick. "We will see if mercy can effect in others what thy

pardon effects in me. And now, my liege, no longer must these walls confine thee. The chambers of the palace await their sovereign. What ho, there!" and going to the door, he threw it open, and agreeably to the orders he had given below, all the officers left in the fortress stood crowded together in the small anteroom, bareheaded, with tapers in their hands, to conduct the monarch to the halls of his conquered foe.

At the sudden sight of the earl, these men, struck involuntarily and at once by the grandeur of his person and his animated aspect, burst forth with the rude retainer's cry, "A Warwick! a Warwick!"

"Silence!" thundered the earl's deep voice. "Who names the subject in the sovereign's presence? Behold your king!"

The men, abashed by the reproof, bowed their heads and sank on their knees, as Warwick took a taper from the table, to lead the way from the prison.

Then Henry turned slowly, and gazed with a lingering eye upon the walls, which even sorrow and solitude had endeared. The little oratory—the crucifix—the relics—the embers burning low on the hearth—the rude time-piece—all took to his thoughtful eye an almost human aspect of melancholy and omen; and the bird, roused, whether by the glare of the lights, or the recent shout of the men, opened its bright eyes, and, fluttering restlessly to and fro, shrilled out its favourite sentence—"Poor Henry!—poor Henry!—wicked men!—who would be a king?"

"Thou hearest it, Warwick?" said Henry, shaking his head.

"Could an eagle speak, it would have another cry than the starling," returned the earl, with a proud smile.

"Why, look you," said the king, once more releasing the bird, which settled on his wrist, "the eagle had broken his heart in the narrow cage—the eagle had been no comforter for a captive; it is these gentler ones that love and soothe us best in our adversities. Tray, Tray, fawn not *now*, sirrah, or I shall think thou hast been false in thy fondness heretofore! Cousin, I attend you."

And with his bird on his wrist, his dog at his heels, Henry VI. followed the earl to the illuminated hall of Edward, where the table was spread for the royal repast, and where his old friends, Manning, Bedle, and Allerton, stood weeping for joy; while from the gallery raised aloft, the musicians gave forth the rough and stirring melody which had gradually fallen out of usage, but which was once the Norman's national air, and which the warlike Margaret of Anjou had retaught to her minstrels—"THE BATTLE HYMN OF ROLLO."

BOOK XI

THE NEW POSITION OF THE KING-MAKER

CHAPTER I

WHEREIN MASTER ADAM WARNER IS NOTABLY COMMENDED AND ADVANCED—AND GREATNESS SAYS TO WISDOM, "THY DESTINY BE MINE, AMEN."

The Chronicles inform us, that two or three days after the entrance of Warwick and Clarence—viz. on the 6th of October—those two leaders, accompanied by the Lords Shrewsbury, Stanley, and a numerous and noble train, visited the Tower in formal state, and escorted the king, robed in blue velvet, the crown on his head, to public thanksgivings at St. Paul's, and thence to the Bishop's Palace,* where he continued chiefly to reside.

The proclamation that announced the change of dynasty was received with apparent acquiescence through the length and breadth of the kingdom, and the restoration of the Lancastrian line seemed yet the more firm and solid by the magnanimous forbearance of Warwick and his councils. Not one execution that could be termed the act of a private revenge, stained with blood the second reign of the peaceful Henry. One only head fell on the scaffold—that of the Earl of

* Not to the Palace at Westminster, as some historians, preferring the French to the English authorities, have asserted—that palace was out of repair.

Worcester.* This solitary execution, which was regarded by all classes as a due concession to justice—only yet more illustrated the general mildness of the new rule.

It was in the earliest days of this sudden Restoration, that Alwyn found the occasion to serve his friends in the Tower. Warwick was eager to conciliate all the citizens, who, whether frankly or grudgingly, had supported his cause; and, amongst these, he was soon informed of the part taken in the Guild-hall by the rising goldsmith. He sent for Alwyn to his house in Warwick-lane, and after complimenting him on his advance in life and repute, since Nicholas had waited on him with baubles for his embassy to France, he offered him the special rank of goldsmith to the king.

The wary, yet honest, trader paused a moment in some embarrassment before he answered—

"My good lord, you are noble and gracious eno' to understand and forgive me when I say that I have had, in the upstart of my fortunes, the countenance of the late King Edward and his queen; and though the public weal made me advise my fellow-citizens not to resist your entry, I would not, at least, have it said that my desertion had benefited my private fortunes."

Warwick coloured, and his lip curled. "Tush, man, assume not virtues which do not exist amongst the sons of trade, nor, much I trow, amongst the sons of Adam.

* Lord Warwick himself did not sit in judgment on Worcester. He was tried and condemned by Lord Oxford. Though some old offences in his Irish government were alleged against him, the cruelties which rendered him so odious were of recent date. He had (as we before took occasion to relate) impaled twenty persons after Warwick's flight into France. The "Warkworth Chronicle" says, "he was ever afterwardes greatly behated among the people for this *disordynate dethe* that he used, contrary to the laws of the lande."

I read thy mind. Thou thinkest it unsafe openly to commit thyself to the new state. Fear not—we are firm."

"Nay, my lord," returned Alwyn, "it is not so. But there are many better citizens than I, who remember that the Yorkists were ever friends to commerce. And you will find that only by great tenderness to our crafts you can win the heart of London, though you have passed its gates."

"I shall be just to all men," answered the earl, drily; "but if the flat caps are false, there are eno' of bonnets of steel to watch over the red rose!"

"You are said, my lord," returned Alwyn, bluntly, "to love the barons, the knights, the gentry, the yeomen, and the peasants, but to despise the traders—I fear me, that report in this is true."

"I love not the trader spirit, man—the spirit that cheats, and cringes, and haggles, and splits straws for pence, and roasts eggs by other men's blazing rafters. Edward of York, forsooth, was a great trader! It was a sorry hour for England, when such as ye, Nick Alwyn, left your green villages for loom and booth. But thus far have I spoken to you as a brave fellow, and of the north countree. I have no time to waste on words. Wilt thou accept mine offer, or name another boon in my power? The man who hath served me *wrongs me—till I have served him again!*"

"My lord, yes; I will name such a boon; safety, and if you will, some grace and honour, to a learned scholar now in the Tower—one Adam Warner, whom——"

"Now in the Tower! Adam Warner! And wanting a friend, I no more an exile! That is my affair, not thine. Grace, honour—ay, to his heart's content. And his noble daughter? *Mort Dieu!* she shall choose

her bridegroom among the best of England. Is she, too, in the fortress?"

"Yes," said Alwyn, briefly, not liking the last part of the earl's speech.

The earl rang the bell on his table. "Send hither Sir Marmaduke Nevile."

Alwyn saw his former rival enter, and heard the earl commission him to accompany, with a fitting train, his own litter to the Tower. "And you, Alwyn, go with your foster brother, and pray Master Warner and his daughter to be my guests for their own pleasure. Come hither, my rude Northman—come. I see I shall have many secret foes in this city—wilt not thou at least be Warwick's open friend?"

Alwyn found it hard to resist the charm of the earl's manner and voice, but, convinced in his own mind that the age was against Warwick, and that commerce and London would be little advantaged by the earl's rule, the trading spirit prevailed in his breast.

"Gracious my lord," he said, bending his knee in no servile homage, "he who befriends my order, commands me."

The proud noble bit his lip, and with a silent wave of his hand, dismissed the foster-brothers.

"Thou art but a churl at best, Nick," said Marmaduke, as the door closed on the young men. "Many a baron would have sold his father's hall for such words from the earl's lip."

"Let barons sell their free conduct for fair words. I keep myself unshackled, to join that cause which best fills the market, and reforms the law. But tell me, I pray thee, sir knight, what makes Warner and his daughter so dear to your lord?"

"What! know you not?—and has she not told you? —Ah—what was I about to say?"

"Can there be a secret between the earl and the scholar?" asked Alwyn, in wonder.

"If there be, it is our place to respect it," returned the Nevile, adjusting his manteline—"and now we must command the litter."

In spite of all the more urgent and harassing affairs that pressed upon him, the earl found an early time to attend to his guests. His welcome to Sibyll was more than courteous—it was paternal. As she approached him, timidly, and with downcast eye, he advanced, placed his hand upon her head—

"The Holy Mother ever have thee in her charge, child!—This is a father's kiss, young mistress," added the earl, pressing his lips to her forehead—"and in this kiss, remember that I pledge to thee care for thy fortunes, honour for thy name—my heart to do thee service—my arm to shield from wrong! Brave scholar, thy lot has become interwoven with my own. Prosperous is now my destiny—my destiny be thine! Amen!"

He turned then to Warner, and without further reference to a past which so galled his proud spirit, he made the scholar explain to him the nature of his labours. In the mind of every man who has passed much of his life in successful action, there is a certain, if we may so say, untaught *mathesis*,—but especially among those who have been bred to the art of war. A great soldier is a great mechanic—a great mathematician, though he may know it not; and Warwick, therefore, better than many a scholar, comprehended the principle upon which Adam founded his experiments. But though he caught also a glimpse of the vast results which such experiments in themselves were calculated to effect, his strong common sense perceived

yet more clearly that the time was not ripe for such startling inventions.

"My friend," he said, "I comprehend thee passably. It is clear to me, that if thou canst succeed in making the elements do the work of man with equal precision, but with far greater force and rapidity, thou must multiply eventually, and, by multiplying, cheapen, all the products of industry—that thou must give to this country the market of the world,—and that thine would be the true alchemy that turneth all to gold."

"Mighty intellect—thou graspest the truth!" exclaimed Adam.

"But," pursued the earl, with a mixture of prejudice and judgment, "grant thee success to the full, and thou wouldst turn this bold land of yeomanry and manhood into one community of griping traders and sickly artisans. *Mort Dieu!* we are over-commerced as it is—the bow is already deserted for the ell-measure. The town populations are ever the most worthless in war. England is begirt with mailed foes: and if by one process she were to accumulate treasure and lose soldiers, she would but tempt invasion and emasculate defenders. Verily, I avise and implore thee to turn thy wit and scholarship to a manlier occupation!"

"My life knows no other object—kill my labour and thou destroyest me," said Adam, in a voice of gloomy despair. Alas, it seemed that, whatever the changes of power, no change could better the hopes of science in an age of iron!

Warwick was moved. "Well," he said, after a pause, "be happy in thine own way. I will do my best at least to protect thee. To-morrow resume thy labours; but this day, at least, thou must feast with me."

And at his banquet that day, among the knights and

barons, and the abbots and the warriors, Adam sat on the dais, near the earl, and Sibyll at "the mess" of the ladies of the Duchess of Clarence. And ere the feast broke up, Warwick thus addressed his company:—

"My friends,—Though I, and most of us reared in the lap of war, have little other clerkship than sufficed our bold fathers before us, yet in the free towns of Italy and the Rhine—yea, and in France, under her politic king—we may see that a day is dawning wherein new knowledge will teach many marvels to our wiser sons. Wherefore it is good that a state should foster men who devote laborious nights and weary days to the advancement of arts and letters, for the glory of our common land. A worthy gentleman, now at this board, hath deeply meditated contrivances which may make our English artisans excel the Flemish looms, who now fatten upon our industry to the impoverishment of the realm. And, above all, he also purposes to complete an invention which may render our ship craft the most notable in Europe. Of this I say no more at present; but I commend our guest, Master Adam Warner, to your good service, and pray you especially, worshipful sirs of the church now present, to shield his good name from that charge which most paineth and endangereth honest men. For ye wot well that the Commons, from ignorance, would impute all to witchcraft that passeth their understanding. Not," added the earl, crossing himself, "that witchcraft does not horribly infect the land, and hath been largely practised by Jacquetta of Bedford, and her confederates, Bungey and others. But our cause needeth no such aid; and all that Master Warner purposes is in behalf of the people, and in conformity with holy church. So this wassail to his health and house."

This characteristic address being received with respect, though with less applause than usually greeted the speeches of the great earl, Warwick added, in a softer and more earnest tone, "And in the fair demoiselle, his daughter, I pray you to acknowledge the dear friend of my beloved lady and child, Anne, Princess of Wales; and for the sake of her highness and in her name, I arrogate to myself a share with Master Warner in this young donzell's guardianship and charge. Know ye, my gallant gentles and fair squires, that he who can succeed in achieving, either by leal love or by bold deeds, as best befit a wooer, the grace of my young ward, shall claim from my hands a knight's fee, with as much of my best land as a bull's hide can cover; and when Heaven shall grant safe passage to the Princess Anne and her noble spouse, we will hold in Smithfield a tourney in honour of St. George and our ladies, wherein, *pardie,* I myself would be sorely tempted to provoke my jealous countess, and break a lance for the fame of the demoiselle whose fair face is married to a noble heart."

That evening, in the galliard, many an admiring eye turned to Sibyll, and many a young gallant, recalling the earl's words, sighed to win her grace. There had been a time when such honour and such homage would have, indeed, been welcome; but now ONE saw them not, and they were valueless. All that, in her earlier girlhood, Sibyll's ambition had coveted, when musing on the brilliant world, seemed now well-nigh fulfilled —her father protected by the first noble of the land, and that not with the degrading condescension of the Duchess of Bedford, but as Power alone should protect Genius—honoured while it honours; her gentle birth recognised; her position elevated; fair fortunes smil-

ing after such rude trials; and all won without servility or abasement. But her ambition having once exhausted itself in a diviner passion, all excitement seemed poor and spiritless compared to the lonely waiting at the humble farm for the voice and step of Hastings. Nay, but for her father's sake, she could almost have loathed the pleasure and the pomp, and the admiration, and the homage, which seemed to insult the reverses of the wandering exile.

The earl had designed to place Sibyll among Isabel's ladies, but the haughty air of the duchess chilled the poor girl; and pleading the excuse that her father's health required her constant attendance, she prayed permission to rest with Warner wherever he might be lodged. Adam himself, now that the Duchess of Bedford and Friar Bungey were no longer in the Tower, entreated permission to return to the place where he had worked the most successfully upon the beloved Eureka, and, as the Tower seemed a safer residence than any private home could be, from popular prejudice and assault, Warwick kindly ordered apartments, far more commodious than they had yet occupied, to be appropriated to the father and daughter. Several attendants were assigned to them, and never was man of letters or science more honoured now than the poor scholar, who, till then, had been so persecuted and despised!

Who shall tell Adam's serene delight? Alchemy and astrology at rest—no imperious duchess—no hateful Bungey—his free mind left to its congenial labours! And Sibyll, when they met, strove to wear a cheerful brow, praying him only never to speak to her of Hastings. The good old man, relapsing into his wonted

mechanical existence, hoped she had forgotten a girl's evanescent fancy.

But the peculiar distinction showed by the earl to Warner, confirmed the reports circulated by Bungey—"that he was, indeed, a fearful nigromancer, who had much helped the earl in his emprise." The earl's address to his guests in behalf both of Warner and Sibyll—the high state accorded to the student, reached even the Sanctuary; for the fugitives there easily contrived to learn all the gossip of the city. Judge of the effect the tale produced upon the envious Bungey—judge of the representations it enabled him to make to the credulous duchess! It was clear now to Jacquetta, as the sun in noon-day, that Warwick rewarded the evil-predicting astrologer for much dark and secret service, which Bungey, had she listened to him, might have frustrated; and she promised the friar that, if ever again she had the power, Warner and the Eureka should be placed at his sole mercy and discretion.

The friar himself, however, growing very weary of the dulness of the Sanctuary, and covetous of the advantages enjoyed by Adam, began to meditate acquiescence in the fashion of the day, and a transfer of his allegiance to the party in power. Emboldened by the clemency of the victors—learning that no rewards for his own apprehension had been offered—hoping that the stout earl would forget or forgive the old offence of the waxen effigies—and aware of the comparative security his friar's gown and cowl afforded him, he resolved one day to venture forth from his retreat. He even flattered himself that he could cajole Adam—whom he really believed the possessor of some high and weird secrets, but whom otherwise he despised as a very weak creature—into forgiving his past brutalities, and soliciting the earl to take him into favour.

At dusk, then, and by the aid of one of the subalterns of the Tower, whom he had formerly made his friend, the friar got admittance into Warner's chamber. Now it so chanced that Adam, having his own superstitions, had lately taken it into his head that all the various disasters which had befallen the Eureka, together with all the little blemishes and defects that yet marred its construction, were owing to the want of the diamond bathed in the mystic moonbeams, which his German authority had long so emphatically prescribed—and now that a monthly stipend far exceeding his wants was at his disposal, and that it became him to do all possible honour to the earl's patronage, he resolved that the diamond should be no longer absent from the operations it was to influence. He obtained one of passable size and sparkle, exposed it the due number of nights to the new moon, and had already prepared its place in the Eureka, and was contemplating it with solemn joy, when Bungey entered.

"Mighty brother," said the friar, bowing to the ground, "be merciful as thou art strong! Verily thou hast proved thyself the magician, and I but a poor wretch in comparison—for lo! thou art rich and honoured, and I poor and proscribed. Deign to forgive thine enemy, and take him as thy slave by right of conquest. Oh, Cogsbones!—oh, Gemini! what a jewel thou hast got!"

"Depart! thou disturbest me," said Adam, oblivious, in his absorption, of the exact reasons for his repugnance, but feeling indistinctly that something very loathsome and hateful was at his elbow, and, as he spoke, he fitted the diamond into its socket.

"What! a jewel—a diamond!—in the—in the—in the—MECHANICAL!" faltered the friar, in profound

astonishment, his mouth watering at the sight. If the Eureka were to be envied before, how much more enviable now? "If ever I get thee again, O ugly talisman," he muttered to himself, "I shall know where to look for something better than a pot to boil eggs."

"Depart, I say!" repeated Adam, turning round at last, and shuddering as he now clearly recognised the friar, and recalled his malignity. "Darest thou molest me still?"

The friar abjectly fell on his knees, and, after a long exordium of penitent excuses, entreated the scholar to intercede in his favour with the earl.

"I want not all *thy* honours and advancement, great Adam—I want only to serve thee, trim thy furnace, and hand thee thy tools, and work out my apprenticeship under thee, master. As for the earl, he will listen to thee, I know, if thou tellest him that I had the trust of his foe, the duchess; that I can give him all her closest secrets; that I——"

"Avaunt! Thou art worse than I deemed thee, wretch! Cruel and ignorant I knew thee—and now, mean and perfidious! *I* work with *thee!* I commend to the earl a living disgrace to the name of scholar! Never! If thou wantest bread and alms, those I can give, as a Christian gives to want; but trust, and honour, and learned repute, and noble toils, those are not for the impostor and the traitor. There—there—there!" And he ran to a closet, took out a handful of small coins, thrust them into the friar's hands, and, pushing him to the door, called to the servants to see his visitor to the gates. The friar turned round with a scowl. He did not dare to utter a threat, but he vowed a vow in his soul, and went his way.

It chanced, some days after this, that Adam, in one

of his musing rambles about the precincts of the Tower, which (since it was not then inhabited as a palace) was all free to his rare and desultory wanderings, came by some workmen employed in repairing a bombard; and, as whatever was of mechanical art always woke his interest, he paused, and pointed out to them a very simple improvement which would necessarily tend to make the balls go farther and more direct to their object. The principal workman, struck with his remarks, ran to one of the officers of the Tower; the officer came to listen to the learned man, and then went to the Earl of Warwick to declare that Master Warner had the most wonderful comprehension of military mechanism. The earl sent for Warner, seized at once upon the very simple truth he suggested as to the proper width of the bore, and holding him in higher esteem than he had ever done before, placed some new cannon he was constructing under his superintendence. As this care occupied but little of his time, Warner was glad to show gratitude to the earl, looking upon the destructive engines simply as mechanical contrivances, and wholly unconscious of the new terror he gave to his name.

Soon did the indignant and conscience-stricken Duchess of Bedford hear, in the Sanctuary, that the fell wizard she had saved from the clutches of Bungey was preparing the most dreadful, infallible, and murtherous instruments of war, against the possible return of her son-in-law!

Leaving Adam to his dreams, and his toils, and his horrible reputation, we return to the world upon the surface—the Life of Action.

CHAPTER II

THE PROSPERITY OF THE OUTER SHOW—THE CARES OF THE MAN

The position of the king-maker was, to a superficial observer, such as might gratify to the utmost the ambition and the pride of man. He had driven from the land one of the most gorgeous princes, and one of the boldest warriors that ever sat upon a throne. He had changed a dynasty without a blow. In the alliances of his daughters, whatever chanced, it seemed certain that by one or the other his posterity would be the kings of England.

The easiness of his victory appeared to prove of itself that the hearts of the people were with him; and the parliament that he hastened to summon, confirmed by law the revolution achieved by a bloodless sword.*

Nor was there aught abroad which menaced disturbance to the peace at home. Letters from the Countess of Warwick and Lady Anne announced their triumphant entry at Paris, where Margaret of Anjou was received with honours never before rendered but to a queen of France.

A solemn embassy, meanwhile, was preparing to proceed from Paris to London to congratulate Henry, and establish a permanent treaty of peace and commerce.† While Charles of Burgundy himself (the only ally left to Edward) supplicated for the continuance of amicable relations with England, stating that they were formed with the country, not with any special person who might wear the crown;‡ and forbade his subjects by

* Lingard, Hume, &c. † Hume—Comines.
‡ Rymer, xi., 683—690.

proclamation, to join any enterprise for the recovery of his throne, which Edward might attempt.

The conduct of Warwick, whom the Parliament had declared, conjointly with Clarence, protector of the realm during the minority of the Prince of Wales, was worthy of the triumph he had obtained. He exhibited now a greater genius for government than he had yet displayed. For all his passions were nerved to the utmost, to consummate his victory and sharpen his faculties. He united mildness towards the defeated faction, with a firmness which repelled all attempt at insurrection.*

In contrast to the splendour that surrounded his daughter Anne, all accounts spoke of the humiliation to which Charles subjected the exiled king, and in the Sanctuary, amidst homicides and felons, the wife of the earl's defeated foe gave birth to a male child, baptised and christened (says the chronicler), "as the son of a common man." For the Avenger and his children were regal authority and gorgeous pomp—for the Fugitive and his offspring were the bread of the exile, or the refuge of the outlaw.

But still the earl's prosperity was hollow—the statue of brass stood on limbs of clay.—The position of a man with the name of subject, but the authority of king, was an unpopular anomaly in England. In the principal trading towns had been long growing up that animosity towards the aristocracy, of which Henry VII. availed himself to raise a despotism (and which, even in our day, causes the main disputes of faction); but the recent revolution was one in which the towns *had had no share.* It was a revolution made by the representatives of the barons and his followers. It

* Habington.

was connected with no advancement of the middle class—it seemed to the men of commerce but the violence of a turbulent and disappointed nobility. The very name given to Warwick's supporters was unpopular in the towns. They were not called the Lancastrians, or the friends of King Henry—they were styled then, and still are so, by the old chronicler, "*The Lord's Party.*" Most of whatever was still feudal—the haughtiest of the magnates—the rudest of the yeomanry—the most warlike of the knights—gave to Warwick the sanction of their allegiance; and this sanction was displeasing to the intelligence of the towns.

Classes in all times have a keen instinct of their own class-interests. The revolution which the earl had effected was the triumph of aristocracy; its natural results would tend to strengthen certainly the moral, and probably the constitutional, power already possessed by that martial order. The new parliament was their creature—Henry VI. was a cipher—his son a boy with unknown character, and according to vulgar scandal, of doubtful legitimacy, seemingly bound hand and foot in the trammels of the archbaron's mighty house—the earl himself had never scrupled to evince a distaste to the change in society which was slowly converting an agricultural into a trading population.

It may be observed, too, that a middle class as rarely unites itself with the idols of the populace as with the chiefs of a seignorie. The brute attachment of the peasants and the mobs to the gorgeous and lavish earl, seemed to the burgesses the sign of a barbaric clanship, opposed to that advance in civilisation towards which they half unconsciously struggled.

And here we must rapidly glance at what, as far

as a statesman may foresee, would have been the probable result of Warwick's ascendancy, if durable and effectual. If attached, by prejudice and birth, to the aristocracy, he was yet, by reputation and habit, attached also to the popular party—that party more popular than the middle class—the majority—the masses!—his whole life had been one struggle against despotism in the crown. Though far from entertaining such schemes as in similar circumstances might have occurred to the deep sagacity of an Italian patrician for the interest of his order, no doubt his policy would have tended to this one aim—the limitation of the monarchy by the strength of an aristocracy endeared to the agricultural population, owing to that population its own powers of defence, with the wants and grievances of that population thoroughly familiar and willing to satisfy the one and redress the other: in short, the great baron would have secured and promoted liberty according to the notions of a seigneur and a Norman, by making the king but the first nobleman of the realm. Had the policy lasted long enough to succeed, the subsequent despotism, which changed a limited into an absolute monarchy under the Tudors, would have been prevented, with all the sanguinary reaction, in which the Stuarts were the sufferers. The earl's family, and his own "large father-like heart," had ever been opposed to religious persecution; and timely toleration to the Lollards might have prevented the long-delayed revenge of their posterity—the Puritans. Gradually, perhaps, might the system he represented (of the whole consequences of which he was unconscious) have changed monarchic into aristocratic government, resting, however, upon broad and popular institutions; but no doubt, also, the middle, or rather

the commercial class, with all the blessings that attend their power, would have risen much more slowly than when made as they were already, partially under Edward IV., and more systematically under Henry VII., the instrument for destroying feudal aristocracy, and thereby establishing for a long and fearful interval the arbitrary rule of the single tyrant. Warwick's dislike to the commercial biasses of Edward was, in fact, not a patrician prejudice alone. It required no great sagacity to perceive that Edward had designed to raise up a class that, though powerful when employed against the barons, would long be impotent against the encroachments of the crown; and the earl viewed that class not only as foes to his own order, but as tools for the destruction of the ancient liberties.

Without presuming to decide which policy, upon the whole, would have been the happier for England—the one that based a despotism on the middle class, or the one that founded an aristocracy upon popular affection, it was clear to the more enlightened burgesses of the great towns, that between Edward of York and the Earl of Warwick a vast principle was at stake, and the commercial king seemed to them a more natural ally than the feudal baron; and equally clear is it to us, now, that the true spirit of the age fought for the false Edward, and against the honest earl.

Warwick did not, however, apprehend any serious results from the passive distaste of the trading towns. His martial spirit led him to despise the least martial part of the population. He knew that the towns would not rise in arms, so long as their charters were respected; and that slow undermining hostility which exists only in opinion, his intellect, so vigorous in immediate dangers, was not far-sighted enough to com-

prehend. More direct cause for apprehension would there have been to a suspicious mind in the demeanour of the earl's colleague in the Protectorate—the Duke of Clarence. It was obviously Warwick's policy to satisfy this weak but ambitious person. The duke was, as before agreed, declared heir to the vast possessions of the house of York. He was invested with the Lieutenantcy of Ireland, but delayed his departure to his government till the arrival of the Prince of Wales. The personal honours accorded him in the meanwhile were those due to a sovereign; but still the duke's brow was moody, though, if the earl noticed it, Clarence rallied into seeming cheerfulness, and reiterated pledges of faith and friendship.

The manner of Isabel to her father was varying and uncertain: at one time hard and cold; at another, as if in the reaction of secret remorse, she would throw herself into his arms, and pray him, weepingly, to forgive her wayward humours. But the curse of the earl's position was that which he had foreseen before quitting Amboise, and which, more or less, attends upon those who, from whatever cause, suddenly desert the party with which all their associations, whether of name or friendship, have been interwoven. His vengeance against one had comprehended many still dear to him. He was not only separated from his old companions in arms, but he had driven their most eminent into exile. He stood alone amongst men whom the habits of an active life had indissolubly connected, in his mind, with recollections of wrath and wrong. Amidst that princely company which begirt him, he hailed no familiar face. Even many of those who most detested Edward (or rather the Woodvilles), recoiled from so startling a desertion to the Lancas-

trian foe. It was a heavy blow to a heart already bruised and sore, when the fiery Raoul de Fulke, who had so idolised Warwick, that, despite his own high lineage, he had worn his badge upon his breast, sought him in the dead of night, and thus said—

"Lord of Salisbury and Warwick, I once offered to serve thee as a vassal, if thou wouldst wrestle with lewd Edward for the crown which only a manly brow should wear; and hadst thou now returned, as Henry of Lancaster returned of old, to gripe the sceptre of the Norman with a conqueror's hand, I had been the first to cry, 'Long live King Richard—namesake and emulator of Cœur de Lion!' But to place upon the throne yon monk-puppet, and to call on brave hearts to worship a patterer of aves and a counter of beads—to fix the succession of England in the adulterous offspring of Margaret,* the butcher-harlot—to give the power of the realm to the men against whom thou thyself hast often led me to strive with lance and battle-axe, is to open a path which leads but to dishonour, and thither Raoul de Fulke follows not even the steps of the Lord of Warwick. Interrupt me not—speak not! As thou to Edward, so I now to thee, forswear allegiance, and I bid thee farewell for ever!"

* One of the greatest obstacles to the cause of the Red Rose was the popular belief that the young prince was not Henry's son. Had that belief not been widely spread and firmly maintained, the lords who arbitrated between Henry VI. and Richard Duke of York, in October, 1460, could scarcely have come to the resolution to set aside the Prince of Wales altogether, to accord Henry the crown for his life, and declare the Duke of York his heir. Ten years previously (in November, 1450), before the young prince was born or thought of, and the proposition was really just and reasonable, it was moved in the House of Commons to declare Richard Duke of York next heir to Henry, which, *at least*, by birthright, he certainly was; but the motion met with little favour, and the mover was sent to the Tower.

"I pardon thee," answered Warwick; "and if ever thou art wronged as I have been, thy heart will avenge me—Go!"

But when this haughty visitor was gone, the earl covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud. A defection perhaps even more severely felt came next. Katherine de Bonville had been the earl's favourite sister: he wrote to her at the convent to which she had retired, praying her affectionately to come to London, "and cheer his vexed spirit, and learn the true cause, not to be told by letter, which had moved him to things once farthest from his thought." The messenger came back—the letter unopened—for Katherine had left the convent, and fled into Burgundy, distrustful, as it seemed to Warwick, of her own brother. The nature of this lion-hearted man was, as we have seen, singularly kindly, frank, and affectionate; and now in the most critical, the most anxious, the most tortured period of his life, confidence and affection were forbidden to him. What had he not given for one hour of the soothing company of his wife, the only being in the world to whom his pride could have communicated the grief of his heart, or the doubts of his conscience! Alas! never on earth should he hear that soft voice again! Anne, too, the gentle, childlike Anne, was afar—but *she* was happy—a basker in the brief sunshine, and blind to the darkening clouds. His elder child, with her changeful moods, added but to his disquiet and unhappiness. Next to Edward, Warwick, of all the House of York, had loved Clarence, though a closer and more domestic intimacy had weakened the affection, by lessening the esteem. But looking farther into the future, he now saw in this alliance the seeds of many a rankling

sorrow. The nearer Anne and her spouse to power and fame, the more bitter the jealousy of Clarence and his wife. Thus, in the very connections which seemed most to strengthen his house, lay all which must destroy the hallowed unity and peace of family and home.

The Archbishop of York had prudently taken no part whatever in the measures that had changed the dynasty—he came now to reap the fruits: did homage to Henry VI., received the Chancellor's seals, and recommenced intrigues for the Cardinal's hat. But between the bold warrior and the wily priest there could be but little of the endearment of brotherly confidence and love. With Montagu alone could the earl confer in cordiality and unreserve; and their similar position, and certain points of agreement in their characters, now more clearly brought out and manifest, served to make their friendship for each other firmer and more tender, in the estrangement of all other ties, than ever it had been before. But the marquis was soon compelled to depart from London, to his post as warden of the northern marches; for Warwick had not the rash presumption of Edward, and neglected no precaution against the return of the dethroned king.

So there, alone, in pomp and in power, vengeance consummated, ambition gratified, but love denied—with an aching heart and a fearless front—amidst old foes made prosperous, and old friends alienated and ruined—stood the king-maker! and, day by day, the untimely streaks of grey showed more and more, amidst the raven curls of the strong man.

CHAPTER III

FARTHER VIEWS INTO THE HEART OF MAN, AND THE CONDITIONS OF POWER

But woe to any man who is called to power with exaggerated expectations of his ability to do good! Woe to the man whom the populace have esteemed a popular champion, and who is suddenly made the guardian of law! The Commons of England had not bewailed the exile of the good earl simply for love of his groaning table and admiration of his huge battle-axe—it was not merely either in pity, or from fame, that his "name had sounded in every song"—and that, to use the strong expression of the chronicler, the people "judged that the sun was clearly taken from the world when he was absent."

They knew him as one who had ever sought to correct the abuses of power—to repair the wrongs of the poor; who, even in war, had forbidden his knights to slay the common men. He was regarded, therefore, as a reformer; and wonderful, indeed, were the things, proportioned to his fame and his popularity, which he was expected to accomplish; and his thorough knowledge of the English character, and experience of every class—especially the lowest as the highest—conjoined with the vigour of his robust understanding, unquestionably—enabled him, from the very first, to put a stop to the lawless violences which had disgraced the rule of Edward. The infamous spoliations of the royal purveyors ceased—the robber-like excesses of the ruder barons and gentry were severely punished—the country felt that a strong hand held the reins of

power. But what is justice, when men ask miracles? The peasant and mechanic were astonished that wages were not doubled—that bread was not to be had for asking—that the disparities of life remained the same, the rich still rich, the poor still poor. In the first days of the revolution, Sir Geoffrey Gates, the freebooter, little comprehending the earl's merciful policy, and anxious naturally to turn a victory into its accustomed fruit of rapine and pillage, placed himself at the head of an armed mob, marched from Kent to the suburbs of London, and, joined by some of the miscreants from the different Sanctuaries, burned and pillaged, ravished and slew. The earl quelled this insurrection with spirit and ease; * and great was the praise he received thereby. But all-pervading is the sympathy the poor feel for the poor! And when even the refuse of the populace once felt the sword of Warwick, some portion of the popular enthusiasm must have silently deserted him.

Robert Hilyard, who had borne so large a share in the restoration of the Lancastrians, now fixed his home in the metropolis; and anxious as ever to turn the current to the popular profit, he saw, with rage and disappointment, that as yet no party but the nobles had really triumphed. He had longed to achieve a revolution that might be called the People's; and he had abetted one that was called "the Lord's doing." The affection he had felt for Warwick arose principally from his regarding him as an instrument to prepare society for the more democratic changes he panted to effect; and, lo! he himself had been the instrument to strengthen the aristocracy. Society resettled after the storm—the noble retained his armies—the dema-

* Hall. Habington.

gogue had lost his mobs! Although, through England were scattered the principles which were ultimately to destroy feudalism—to humble the fierce barons into silken lords—to reform the church—to ripen into a commonwealth, through the representative system—the principles were but in the germ; and when Hilyard mingled with the traders or the artisans of London, and sought to form a party which might comprehend something of steady policy and definite object, he found himself regarded as a visionary fanatic by some, as a dangerous dare-devil by the rest. Strange to say, Warwick was the only man who listened to him with attention; the man behind the age, and the man before the age, ever have some inch of ground in common: both desired to increase liberty; both honestly and ardently loved the masses; but each in the spirit of his order: Warwick defended freedom as against the throne, Hilyard as against the barons. Still, notwithstanding their differences, each was so convinced of the integrity of the other, that it wanted only a foe in the field to unite them as before. The natural ally of the popular baron was the leader of the populace.

Some minor, but still serious, griefs added to the embarrassment of the earl's position. Margaret's jealousy had bound him to defer all rewards to lords and others, and encumbered with a provisional council all great acts of government, all grants of offices, lands, or benefits.* And who knows not the expectations of men after a successful revolution! The royal exchequer was so empty, that even the ordinary household was suspended; † and as ready money was then

* Sharon Turner.

† See Ellis's "Original Letters," from Harleian MSS., second series, vol. i., letter 42.

prodigiously scarce, the mighty revenues of Warwick barely sufficed to pay the expenses of the expedition which, at his own cost, had restored the Lancastrian line. Hard position, both to generosity and to prudence, to put off and apologise to just claims and valiant service!

With intense, wearying, tortured anxiety, did the earl await the coming of Margaret and her son. The conditions imposed on him in their absence crippled all his resources. Several even of the Lancastrian nobles held aloof, while they saw no authority but Warwick's. Above all, he relied upon the effect that the young Prince of Wales's presence, his beauty, his graciousness, his frank spirit—mild as his father's, bold as his grandsire's—would create upon all that inert and neutral mass of the public, the affection of which, once gained, makes the solid strength of a government. The very appearance of that prince would at once dispel the slander on his birth. His resemblance to his heroic grandfather would suffice to win him all the hearts, by which, in absence, he was regarded as a stranger, a dubious alien. How often did the earl groan forth—"If the prince were but here, all were won!" Henry was worse than a cipher—he was an eternal embarrassment. His good intentions, his scrupulous piety, made him ever ready to interfere. The church had got hold of him already, and prompted him to issue proclamations against the disguised Lollards, which would have lost him, at one stroke, half his subjects. This Warwick prevented, to the great discontent of the honest prince. The moment required all the prestige that an imposing presence and a splendid court could bestow. And Henry, glad of the poverty of his exchequer, deemed it a sin to make a parade of

earthly glory. "Heaven will punish me again," said he, meekly, "if, just delivered from a dungeon, I gild my unworthy self with all the vanities of perishable power."

There was not a department which the chill of this poor king's virtue did not somewhat benumb. The gay youths, who had revelled in the alluring court of Edward IV., heard, with disdainful mockery, the grave lectures of Henry on the length of their lovelocks and the beakers of their shoes. The brave warriors presented to him for praise were entertained with homilies on the guilt of war. Even poor Adam was molested and invaded by Henry's pious apprehensions that he was seeking, by vain knowledge, to be superior to the will of Providence.

Yet, albeit perpetually irritating and chafing the impetuous spirit of the earl, the earl, strange to say, loved the king more and more. This perfect innocence, this absence from guile and self-seeking, in the midst of an age never excelled for fraud, falsehood, and selfish simulation, moved Warwick's admiration as well as pity. Whatever contrasted Edward IV. had a charm for him. He schooled his hot temper, and softened his deep voice, in that holy presence; and the intimate persuasion of the hollowness of all worldly greatness itself had forced upon the earl's mind, made something congenial between the meek saint and the fiery warrior. For the hundredth time groaned Warwick, as he quitted Henry's presence—

"Would that my gallant son-in-law were come! his spirit will soon learn how to govern, then Warwick may be needed no more! I am weary—sore weary of the task of ruling men!"

"Holy St. Thomas!" bluntly exclaimed Marma-

duke, to whom these sad words were said—"whenever you visit the king you come back—pardon me, my lord—half unmanned. He would make a monk of you!"

"Ah!" said Warwick, thoughtfully—"there have been greater marvels than that. Our boldest fathers often died the meekest shavelings. An' I had ruled this realm as long as Henry—nay, an' this same life I lead now were to continue two years, with its broil and fever, I could well conceive the sweetness of the cloister and repose. How sets the wind? Against them still! —against them still! I cannot bear this suspense!"

The winds had ever seemed malignant to Margaret of Anjou, but never more than now. So long a continuance of stormy and adverse weather was never known in the memory of man; and we believe that it has scarcely its parallel in history.

The earl's promise to restore King Henry was fulfilled in October. From November to the following April, Margaret with the young and royal pair, and the Countess of Warwick, lay at the sea-side, waiting for a wind.* Thrice, in defiance of all warnings from the mariners of Harfleur, did she put to sea, and thrice was she driven back on the coast of Normandy—her ships much damaged. Her friends protested that this malice of the elements was caused by sorcery †—a belief which gained ground in England, exhilarated the Duchess of Bedford, and gave new fame to Bungey, who arrogated all the merit, and whose weather wisdom, indeed, had here borne out his predictions. Many besought Margaret not to tempt Providence, nor to trust the sea; but the queen was firm to her purpose, and her son laughed at omens—yet still the vessels could only leave the harbour to be driven back upon the land.

* Fabyan, 502. † Hall, "Warkworth Chronicle."

Day after day the first question of Warwick, when the sun rose, was, "How sets the wind?" Night after night, ere he retired to rest—"Ill sets the wind!" sighed the earl. The gales that forbade the coming of the royal party, sped to the unwilling lingerers—courier after courier—envoy after envoy, and at length Warwick, unable to bear the sickening suspense at distance, went himself to Dover,* and from its white cliffs looked, hour by hour, for the sails which were to bear "Lancaster and its fortunes." The actual watch grew more intolerable than the distant expectation, and the earl sorrowfully departed to his castle of Warwick, at which Isabel and Clarence then were. Alas! where the old smile of home?

CHAPTER IV

THE RETURN OF EDWARD OF YORK

And the winds still blew, and storm was on the tide, and Margaret came not; when, in the gusty month of March, the fishermen of the Humber beheld a single ship, without flag or pennon, and sorely stripped and rivelled by adverse blasts, gallantly struggling towards the shore. The vessel was not of English build, and resembled, in its bulk and fashion, those employed by the Easterlings in their trade;—half merchant-man, half war-ship.

The villagers of Ravenspur—the creek of which, the vessel now rapidly made to—imagining that it was some trading craft in distress, grouped round the banks, and some put out their boats. But the vessel

* Hall.

held on its way, and, as the water was swelled by the tide, and unusually deep, silently cast anchor close ashore, a quarter of a mile from the crowd.

The first who leapt on land, was a knight of lofty stature, and in complete armour, richly inlaid with gold arabesques. To him succeeded another, also in mail, and, though well built and fair proportioned, of less imposing presence. And then, one by one, the womb of the dark ship gave forth a number of armed soldiers, infinitely larger than it could have been supposed to contain, till the knight, who first landed, stood the centre of a group of five hundred men. Then, when lowered from the vessel, barbed and caparisoned, some five score horses; and, finally, the sailors and rowers, armed but with steel caps and short swords, came on shore, till not a man was left on board.

"Now praise," said the chief knight, "to God and St. George, that we have escaped the water! and not with invisible winds, but with bodily foes must our war be waged."

"*Beau sire,*" cried one knight who had debarked immediately after the speaker, and who seemed, from his bearing and equipment, of higher rank than those that followed—"*beau sire,* this is a slight army to reconquer a king's realm! Pray Heaven, that our bold companions have also escaped the deep!"

"Why verily, we are not eno', at the best, to spare one man," said the chief knight gaily, "but, lo! we are not without welcomers." And he pointed to the crowd of villagers who now slowly neared the warlike group, but halting at a little distance, continued to gaze at them in some anxiety and alarm.

"Ho there! good fellows!" cried the leader, striding towards the throng—"what name give you to this village?"

"Ravenspur, please your worship," answered one of the peasants.

"Ravenspur—hear you that, lords and friends? Accept the omen! On this spot landed, from exile, Henry of Bolingbroke, known, afterwards, in our annals as King Henry IV.! Bare is the soil of corn and of trees —it disdains meaner fruit; it *grows kings!* Hark!" —The sound of a bugle was heard at a little distance, and in a few moments, a troop of about a hundred men were seen rising above an undulation in the ground, and as the two bands recognised each other, a shout of joy was given and returned.

As this new reinforcement advanced, the peasantry and fishermen, attracted by curiosity and encouraged by the peaceable demeanour of the debarkers, drew nearer, and mingled with the first comers.

"What manner of men be ye, and what want ye?" asked one of the bystanders, who seemed of better nurturing than the rest, and who, indeed, was a small franklin.

No answer was returned by those he more immediately addressed, but the chief knight heard the question, and suddenly unbuckling his helmet, and giving it to one of those beside him, he turned to the crowd a countenance of singular beauty, at once animated and majestic, and said, in a loud voice, "We are Englishmen, like you, and we come here to claim our rights. Ye seem tall fellows and honest. Standard-bearer, unfurl our flag!" And, as the ensign suddenly displayed the device of a sun, in a field azure, the chief continued, "March under this banner, and for every day ye serve, ye shall have a month's hire."

"Marry!" quoth the franklin, with a suspicious, sinister look, "these be big words. And who are you,

sir knight, who would levy men in King Henry's kingdom?"

"Your knees, fellows!" cried the second knight. "Behold your true liege and suzerain, Edward IV.! Long live King Edward!"

The soldiers caught up the cry, and it was re-echoed lustily by the smaller detachment that now reached the spot; but no answer came from the crowd. They looked at each other in dismay, and retreated rapidly from their place amongst the troops. In fact, the whole of the neighbouring district was devoted to Warwick, and many of the peasantry about had joined the former rising under Sir John Coniers. The franklin alone retreated not with the rest; he was a bluff, plain, bold fellow, with good English blood in his veins. And when the shout ceased, he said, shortly, "We, hereabouts, know no king, but King Henry. We fear you would impose upon us. We cannot believe that a great lord like him you call Edward IV. would land, with a handful of men, to encounter the armies of Lord Warwick. We forewarn you to get into your ship, and go back as fast as ye came, for the stomach of England is sick of brawls and blows; and what ye devise is treason!"

Forth from the new detachment stepped a youth of small stature, not in armour, and with many a weather stain on his gorgeous dress. He laid his hand upon the franklin's shoulder, "Honest and plain-dealing fellow," said he, "you are right: pardon the foolish outburst of these brave men, who cannot forget as yet that their chief has worn the crown. We come back not to disturb this realm, nor to effect aught against King Henry, whom the saints have favoured. No, by St. Paul, we come but back to claim our lands unjustly

forfeit. My noble brother here is not king of England, since the people will it not, but he *is* Duke of York, and he will be contented if assured of the style and lands our father left him. For me, called Richard of Gloucester, I ask nothing, but leave to spend my manhood where I have spent my youth, under the eyes of my renowned godfather, Richard Nevile, Earl of Warwick. So report of us. Whither leads yon road?"

"To York," said the franklin, softened, despite his judgment, by the irresistible suavity of the voice that addressed him.

"Thither will we go, my lord duke, and brother, with your leave," said Prince Richard, "peaceably and as petitioners. God save ye, friends and countrymen, pray for us, that King Henry and the parliament may do us justice. We are not over rich now, but better times may come. Largess!" and filling both hands with coins from his gipsire, he tossed the bounty among the peasants.

"*Mille tonnere!* What means he with this humble talk of King Henry and the parliament?" whispered Edward to the Lord Say, while the crowd scrambled for the largess, and Richard smilingly mingled amongst them, and conferred with the franklin.

"Let him alone, I pray you, my liege; I guess his wise design. And now for our ships. What orders for the master?"

"For the other vessels let them sail or anchor as they list. But for the bark that has borne Edward king of England to the land of his ancestors there is no return!"

The royal adventurer then beckoned the Flemish master of the ship, who, with every sailor aboard, had debarked, and the loose dresses of the mariners made a

strong contrast to the mail of the warriors with whom they mingled.

"Friend!" said Edward, in French, "thou hast said that thou wilt share my fortunes, and that thy good fellows are no less free of courage and leal in trust."

"It is so, sire. Not a man who has gazed on thy face, and heard thy voice, but longs to serve one on whose brow Nature has written *king*."

"And trust me," said Edward, "no prince of my blood shall be dearer to me than you and yours, my friends in danger and in need. And sith it be so, the ship that hath borne such hearts and such hopes should, in sooth, know no meaner freight. Is all prepared?"

"Yes, sire, as you ordered. The train is laid for the brennen."

"Up, then, with the fiery signal, and let it tell, from cliff to cliff, from town to town, that Edward the Plantagenet, once returned to England, leaves it but for the grave!"

The master bowed, and smiled grimly. The sailors, who had been prepared for the burning, arranged before between the master and the prince, and whose careless hearts Edward had thoroughly won to his person and his cause, followed the former towards the ship, and stood silently grouped around the shore. The soldiers, less informed, gazed idly on, and Richard now regained Edward's side.

"Reflect," he said, as he drew him apart, "that, when on this spot landed Henry of Bolingbroke, he *gave not out that he was marching to the throne of Richard II.* He professed but to claim his duchy—and men were influenced by justice: till they became agents of ambition. This be your policy; with two thousand men you are but Duke of York; with ten

thousand men you are King of England! In passing hither, I met with many, and sounding the temper of the district, I find it not ripe to share your hazard. The world soon ripens when it hath to hail success!"

"O young boy's smooth face!—O old man's deep brain!" said Edward, admiringly—"what a king hadst *thou* made!"

A sudden flush passed over the prince's pale cheek, and, ere it died away, a flaming torch was hurled aloft in the air—it fell whirling into the ship—a moment, and a loud crash—a moment, and a mighty blaze! Up sprung from the deck, along the sails, the sheeted fire—

"A giant beard of flame." *

It reddened the coast—the skies from far and near; it glowed on the faces and the steel of the scanty army—it was seen, miles away, by the warders of many a castle manned with the troops of Lancaster;—it brought the steed from the stall, the courier to the selle;—it sped, as of old the beacon fire that announced to Clytemnestra the return of the Argive king. From post to post rode the fiery news, till it reached Lord Warwick in his hall, King Henry in his palace, Elizabeth in her sanctuary. The iron step of the dauntless Edward was once more pressed upon the soil of England.

* φλογος μεγαν πωγωνα.
Æsch. Agam. 314.

CHAPTER V

THE PROGRESS OF THE PLANTAGENET

A few words suffice to explain the formidable arrival we have just announced. Though the Duke of Burgundy had, by public proclamation, forbidden his subjects to aid the exiled Edward; yet, whether moved by the entreaties of his wife, or wearied by the remonstrances of his brother-in-law, he at length privately gave the dethroned monarch 50,000 florins to find troops for himself, and secretly hired Flemish and Dutch vessels to convey him to England.* But, so small was the force to which the bold Edward trusted his fortunes, that it almost seemed as if Burgundy sent him forth to his destruction. He sailed from the coast of Zealand; the winds, if less unmanageable than those that blew off the seaport where Margaret and her armament awaited a favouring breeze, were still adverse. Scared from the coast of Norfolk by the vigilance of Warwick and Oxford, who had filled that district with armed men, storm and tempest drove him at last to Humber Head, where we have seen him land, and whence we pursue his steps.

The little band set out upon its march, and halted for the night at a small village two miles inland. Some of the men were then sent out on horseback, for news of the other vessels, that bore the remnant of the invading force. These had, fortunately, effected a landing in various places; and, before daybreak, Anthony Woodville, and the rest of the troops, had joined the leader of an enterprise that seemed but the rashness of

* Comines. Hall. Lingard. S. Turner.

despair, for its utmost force, including the few sailors allured to the adventurer's standard, was about two thousand men.* Close and anxious was the consultation then held. Each of the several detachments reported alike of the sullen indifference of the population, which each had sought to excite in favour of Edward. Light riders † were despatched in various directions, still farther to sound the neighbourhood. All returned ere noon, some bruised and maltreated by the stones and staves of the rustics, and not a voice had been heard to echo the cry—"Long live King Edward!" The profound sagacity of Gloucester's guileful counsel was then unanimously recognised. Richard despatched a secret letter to Clarence; and it was resolved immediately to proceed to York, and to publish everywhere along the road that the fugitive had returned but to claim his private heritage, and remonstrate with the parliament which had awarded the Duchy of York to Clarence, his younger brother.

"Such a power," saith the Chronicle, "hath justice ever among men, that all, moved by mercy or compassion, began either to favour or not to resist him." And so, wearing the Lancastrian Prince of Wales's cognisance of the ostrich feather, crying out as they marched—"Long live King Henry," the hardy liars, four days after their debarkation, arrived at the gates of York.

Here, not till after much delay and negotiation, Edward was admitted only as Duke of York, and upon condition that he would swear to be a faithful and loyal servant to King Henry; and at the gate by which he was to enter, Edward actually took that oath, "a priest

* Fifteen hundred, according to the Croyland historian.
† Hall.

being by to say mass in the mass tyme, receiving the body of our blessed Saviour!" *

Edward tarried not long in York; he pushed forward. Two great nobles guarded those districts—Montagu, and the Earl of Northumberland, to whom Edward had restored his lands and titles, and who, on condition of retaining them, had re-entered the service of Lancaster. This last, a true server of the times, who had sided with all parties, now judged it discreet to remain neutral.† But Edward must pass within a few miles of Pontefract Castle, where Montagu lay with a force that could destroy him at a blow. Edward was prepared for the assault, but trusted to deceive the marquis, as he had deceived the citizens of York; the more for the strong personal love Montagu had ever shown him. If not, he was prepared equally to die in the field, rather than eat again the bitter bread of the exile. But to his inconceivable joy and astonishment, Montagu, like Northumberland, lay idle and supine. Edward and his little troop threaded safely the formidable pass. Alas! Montagu had that day received a formal order from the Duke of Clarence, as co-protector of the realm,‡ to suffer Edward to march on,

* Hall.

† This is the most favourable interpretation of his conduct: according to some he was in correspondence with Edward, who showed his letters.

‡ Our historians have puzzled their brains in ingenious conjectures of the cause of Montagu's fatal supineness at this juncture, and have passed over the only probable solution of the mystery, which is to be found simply enough stated thus in Stowe's Chronicle:—"The Marquis Montacute would have fought with King Edward, but that *he had received letters from the Duke of Clarence that he should not fight till hee came.*" This explanation is borne out by the Warkworth Chronicler and others, who, in an evident mistake of the person addressed, state that Clarence wrote word *to Warwick* not to fight till he came. Clarence could not have written so to Warwick, who, according to all authorities, was mustering his

provided his force was small, and he had taken the oaths to Henry, and assumed but the title of Duke of York, "for your brother the earl hath had compunctious visitings, and would fain forgive what hath passed, for my father's sake, and unite all factions by Edward's voluntary abdication of the throne—at all hazards, I am on my way northward, and you will not fight till I come." The marquis, who knew the conscientious doubts which Warwick had entertained in his darker hours, who had no right to disobey the co-protector, who knew no reason to suspect Lord Warwick's son-in-law, and who, moreover, was by no means anxious to be, himself, the executioner of Edward, whom he had once so truly loved,—though a little marvelling at Warwick's softness, yet did not discredit the letter, and the less regarded the free passage he left to the returned exiles, from contempt for the smallness of their numbers, and his persuasion that if the earl saw fit to alter his counsels, Edward was still more in his power the farther he advanced amidst a hostile population, and towards the armies which the Lords Exeter and Oxford were already mustering.

But that free passage was everything to Edward! It made men think that Montagu, as well as Northumberland, favoured his enterprise; that the hazard was less rash and hopeless than it had seemed; that Edward counted upon finding his most powerful allies among those falsely supposed to be his enemies. The popularity Edward had artfully acquired amongst the

troops near London, and not in the way to fight Edward; nor could Clarence have had authority to issue such commands to his colleague, nor would his colleague have attended to them, since we have the amplest testimony that Warwick was urging all his captains to attack Edward at once. The duke's order was, therefore, clearly addressed to Montagu.

captains of Warwick's own troops, on the march to Middleham, now bested him. Many of them were knights and gentlemen residing in the very districts through which he passed. They did not join him, but they did not oppose. Then, rapidly flocked to "the Sun of York,"—first, the adventurers and condottieri, who in civil war adopt any side for pay; next came the disappointed, the ambitious, and the needy. The hesitating began to resolve, the neutral to take a part. From the state of petitioners supplicating a pardon, every league the Yorkists marched advanced them to the dignity of assertors of a cause. Doncaster first, then Nottingham, then Leicester—true to the town spirit we have before described—opened their gates to the trader prince.

Oxford and Exeter reached Newark with their force. Edward marched on them at once. Deceived as to his numbers, they took panic and fled. When once the foe flies, friends ever start up from the very earth! Hereditary partisans—gentlemen, knights, and nobles—now flocked fast round the adventurer. Then came Lovell, and Cromwell, and D'Eyncourt, ever true to York; and Stanley, never true to any cause. Then came the brave knights Parr and Norris, and De Burgh; and no less than three thousand retainers belonging to Lord Hastings—the new man—obeyed the summons of his couriers and joined their chief at Leicester.

Edward of March, who had landed at Ravenspur with a handful of brigands, now saw a king's army under his banner.* Then, the audacious perjurer threw

* The perplexity and confusion which involve the annals of this period may be guessed by this—that two historians, eminent for research (Lingard and Sharon Turner), differ so widely as to the numbers who had now joined Edward, that

away the mask; then, forth went—not the prayer of the attainted Duke of York—but the proclamation of the indignant king. England now beheld *two* sovereigns, equal in their armies. It was no longer a rebellion to be crushed; it was a dynasty to be decided.

CHAPTER VI

LORD WARWICK, WITH THE FOE IN THE FIELD AND THE TRAITOR AT THE HEARTH

Every precaution which human wisdom could foresee had Lord Warwick taken to guard against invasion, or to crush it at the onset.* All the coasts on which it was most probable Edward would land had been strongly guarded. And if the Humber had been left without regular troops, it was because prudence might calculate that the very spot where Edward did land was the very last he would have selected—unless guided by fate to his destruction—in the midst of an unfriendly population, and in face of the armies of Northumberland and of Montagu. The moment the earl heard of Edward's reception at York—far from the weakness which the false Clarence (already in correspondence with Gloucester) imputed to him—he de-

Lingard asserts that at Nottingham he was at the head of fifty or sixty thousand men; and Turner gives him, at the most, between six and seven thousand. The latter seems nearer to the truth. We must here regret that Turner's partiality to the House of York induces him to slur over Edward's detestable perjury at York, and to accumulate all rhetorical arts to command admiration for his progress—to the prejudice of the salutary moral horror we ought to feel for the atrocious perfidy and violation of oath to which he owed the first impunity that secured the after triumph.

* Hall.

spatched to Montagu, by Marmaduke Nevile, peremptory orders to intercept Edward's path, and give him battle before he could advance farther towards the centre of the island. We shall explain presently why this messenger did not reach the marquis. But Clarence was some hours before him in his intelligence and his measures.

When the earl next heard that Edward had passed Pontefract with impunity, and had reached Doncaster, he flew first to London, to arrange for its defence; consigned the care of Henry to the Archbishop of York, mustered a force already quartered in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, and then marched rapidly back towards Coventry, where he had left Clarence with seven thousand men; while he despatched new messengers to Montagu and Northumberland, severely rebuking the former for his supineness, and ordering him to march in all haste to attack Edward in the rear. The earl's activity, promptitude, and all-provident generalship, form a mournful contrast to the errors, the pusillanimity, and the treachery of others, which hitherto, as we have seen, made all his wisest schemes abortive. Despite Clarence's sullenness, Warwick had discovered no reason, as yet, to doubt his good faith. The oath he had taken—not only to Henry, in London, but to Warwick, at Amboise—had been the strongest which can bind man to man. If the duke had not gained all he had hoped, he had still much to lose and much to dread by desertion to Edward. He had been the loudest in bold assertions when he heard of the invasion; and above all, Isabel, whose influence over Clarence, at that time, the earl overrated, had, at the tidings of so imminent a danger to her father, forgot all her displeasure and recovered all her tenderness.

During Warwick's brief absence, Isabel had, indeed, exerted her utmost power to repair her former wrongs, and induce Clarence to be faithful to his oath. Although her inconsistency and irresolution had much weakened her influence with the duke, for natures like his are governed but by the ascendency of a steady and tranquil will, yet still she so far prevailed, that the duke had despatched to Richard a secret courier, informing him that he had finally resolved not to desert his father-in-law.

This letter reached Gloucester as the invaders were on their march to Coventry, before the strong walls of which the Duke of Clarence lay encamped. Richard, after some intent and silent reflection, beckoned to him his familiar Catesby.

"Marmaduke Nevile, whom our scouts seized on his way to Pontefract, is safe, and in the rear?"

"Yes, my lord; prisoners but encumber us; shall I give orders to the provost to end his captivity?"

"Ever ready, Catesby!" said the duke, with a fell smile. "No—hark ye, Clarence vacillates; if he hold firm to Warwick, and the two forces fight honestly against us, we are lost; on the other hand, if Clarence join us, his defection will bring not only the men he commands, all of whom are the retainers of the York lands and duchy, and therefore free from peculiar bias to the earl, and easily lured back to their proper chief; but it will set an example that will create such distrust and panic amongst the enemy, and give such hope of fresh desertions to our own men, as will open to us the keys of the metropolis. But Clarence, I say, vacillates; look you, here is his letter from Amboise to King Edward; see, his duchess, Warwick's very daughter, approves the promise it contains! If this letter reach

Warwick, and Clarence knows it is in his hand, George will have no option but to join us. He will never dare to face the earl, his pledge to Edward once revealed——"

"Most true; a very legal subtlety, my lord," said the lawyer Catesby, admiringly.

"You can serve us in this. Fall back; join Sir Marmaduke; affect to sympathise with him; affect to side with the earl; affect to make terms for Warwick's amity and favour; affect to betray us; affect to have stolen this letter. Give it to young Nevile, artfully effect his escape, as if against our knowledge, and commend him to lose not an hour—a moment—in gaining the earl, and giving him so important a forewarning of the meditated treason of his son-in-law."

"I will do all—I comprehend: but how will the duke learn in time that the letter is on its way to Warwick?"

"I will see the duke, in his own tent."

"And how shall I effect Sir Marmaduke's escape?"

"Send hither the officer who guards the prisoner; I will give him orders to obey thee in all things."

The invaders marched on. The earl, meanwhile, had reached Warwick,—hastened thence, to throw himself into the stronger fortifications of the neighbouring Coventry, without the walls of which Clarence was still encamped; Edward advanced on the town of Warwick thus vacated; and Richard, at night, rode along to the camp of Clarence.*

The next day, the earl was employed in giving orders to his lieutenants to march forth, join the troops of his son-in-law, who were a mile from the walls, and advance upon Edward, who had that morning quitted Warwick town—when, suddenly, Sir Marmaduke

* Hall, and others.

Nevile rushed into his presence, and, faltering out—"Beware, beware!" placed in his hands the fatal letter which Clarence had despatched from Amboise.

Never did blow more ruthless fall upon man's heart! Clarence's perfidy—*that* might be disdained, but the closing lines, which revealed a daughter's treachery—words cannot express the father's anguish.

The letter dropped from his hand, a stupor seized his senses, and, ere yet recovered, pale men hurried into his presence to relate how, amidst joyous trumpets and streaming banners, Richard of Gloucester had led the Duke of Clarence to the brotherly embrace of Edward.*

Breaking from these messengers of evil news, that could not now surprise, the earl strode on, alone, to his daughter's chamber.

He placed the letter in her hands, and folding his arms, said—"What sayest thou of this, Isabel of Clarence?"

The terror, the shame, the remorse, that seized upon the wretched lady—the death-like lips—the suppressed shriek—the momentary torpor, succeeded by the impulse which made her fall at her father's feet, and clasp his knees—told the earl, if he had before doubted, that the letter lied not—that Isabel had known and sanctioned its contents.

He gazed on her (as she grovelled at his feet) with a look that her eyes did well to shun.

* Hall. The chronicler adds—"It was no marvell that the Duke of Clarence, with so small persuasion and less exhorting turned from the Earl of Warwick's party, for, as you have heard before, *this merchandise* was laboured, conducted, and concluded by a damsell, when the duke was in the French court, to the earl's utter confusion." Hume makes a notable mistake in deferring the date of Clarence's desertion to the battle of Barnet.

"Curse me not—curse me not!"—cried Isabel, awed by his very silence. "It was but a brief frenzy. Evil counsel—evil passion! I was maddened that my boy had lost a crown. I repented—I repented—Clarence shall yet be true. He hath promised it—vowed it to me;—hath written to Gloucester to retract all—to——"

"Woman!—Clarence is in Edward's camp!"

Isabel started to her feet, and uttered a shriek so wild and despairing, that at least it gave to her father's lacerated heart the miserable solace of believing the *last* treason had not been shared. A softer expression—one of pity, if not of pardon—stole over his dark face.

"I curse thee not," he said; "I rebuke thee not. Thy sin hath its own penance. Ill omen broods on the hearth of the household traitor! Never more shalt thou see holy love in a husband's smile. His kiss shall have the taint of Judas. From his arms thou shalt start with horror, as from those of thy wronged father's betrayer—perchance his deathsman! Ill omen broods on the cradle of the child for whom a mother's ambition was but a daughter's perfidy. Woe to thee, wife and mother! Even my forgiveness cannot avert thy doom!"

"Kill me—kill me!" exclaimed Isabel, springing towards him; but seeing his face averted, his arms folded on his breast—that noble breast, never again her shelter—she fell lifeless on the floor.*

* As our narrative does not embrace the future fate of the Duchess of Clarence, the reader will pardon us if we remind him that her firstborn (who bore his illustrious grandfather's title of Earl of Warwick) was cast into prison on the accession of Henry VII., and afterwards beheaded by that king. By birth, he was the rightful heir to the throne. The ill-fated Isabel died young (five years after the date at which our tale has arrived). One of her female attendants was tried and executed on the charge of having poisoned her. Clarence lost no time in seeking to supply her place. He solicited the hand

The earl looked round, to see that none were by to witness his weakness, took her gently in his arms, laid her on her couch, and, bending over her a moment, prayed God to pardon her.

He then hastily left the room—ordered her handmaids and her litter, and while she was yet unconscious, the gates of the town opened, and forth through the arch went the closed and curtained vehicle which bore the ill-fated duchess to the new home her husband had made with her father's foe! The earl watched it from the casement of his tower, and said to himself—

"I had been unmanned, had I known her within the same walls. Now for ever I dismiss her memory and her crime. Treachery hath done its worst, and my soul is proof against all storms!"

At night came messengers from Clarence and Edward, who had returned to Warwick town, with offers of *pardon* to the earl—with promises of favour, power, and grace. To Edward the earl deigned no answer; to the messenger of Clarence he gave this—"Tell thy master, I had liefer be always like myself, than like a false and a perjured duke, and that I am determined never to leave the war till I have lost mine own life, or utterly extinguished and put down my foes." *

After this terrible defection, neither his remaining forces, nor the panic amongst them which the duke's desertion had occasioned, nor the mighty interests involved in the success of his arms, nor the irretrievable advantage which even an engagement of equivocal re-

of Mary of Burgundy, sole daughter and heir of Charles the Bold. Edward's jealousy and fear forbade him to listen to an alliance that might, as Lingard observes, enable Clarence "to employ the power of Burgundy to win the crown of England;" and hence arose those dissensions which ended in the secret murder of the perjured duke.

* Hall.

sult with the earl in person, would give to Edward, justified Warwick in gratifying the anticipations of the enemy—that his valour and wrath would urge him into immediate and imprudent battle.

Edward, after the vain bravado of marching up to the walls of Coventry, moved on towards London. Thither the earl sent Marmaduke, enjoining the Archbishop of York and the lord mayor but to hold out the city for three days, and he would come to their aid with such a force as would insure lasting triumph. For, indeed, already were hurrying to his banner, Montagu, burning to retrieve his error—Oxford and Exeter, recovered from, and chafing at, their past alarm. Thither his nephew, Fitzhugh, led the earl's own clansmen of Middleham; thither were spurring Somerset from the west,* and Sir Thomas Dymoke from Lincolnshire, and the Knight of Lytton, with his hardy retainers, from the Peak. Bold Hilyard waited not far from London, with a host of mingled yeomen and bravos, reduced, as before, to discipline under his own sturdy energies, and the military craft of Sir John Coniers. If London would but hold out till these forces could unite, Edward's destruction was still inevitable.

* Most historians state that Somerset was then in London; but Sharon Turner quotes "Harleian MSS. 38," to show that he had left the metropolis "to raise an army from the western counties," and ranks him amongst the generals at the battle of Barnet.

BOOK XII

THE BATTLE OF BARNET

CHAPTER I

A KING IN HIS CITY HOPES TO RECOVER HIS REALM—A WOMAN IN HER CHAMBER FEARS TO FORFEIT HER OWN

Edward and his army reached St. Alban's. Great commotion—great joy, were in the Sanctuary of Westminster! The Jerusalem Chamber, therein, was made the high council-hall of the friends of York. Great commotion, great terror, were in the city of London—timid Master Stokton had been elected mayor; horribly frightened either to side with an Edward or a Henry, timid Master Stokton feigned or fell ill. Sir Thomas Cook, a wealthy and influential citizen, and a member of the House of Commons, had been appointed deputy in his stead. Sir Thomas Cook took fright also, and ran away.* The power of the city thus fell into the hands of Ursewike, the Recorder, a zealous Yorkist. Great commotion, great scorn, were in the breasts of the populace, as the Archbishop of York, hoping thereby to rekindle their loyalty, placed King Henry on horseback, and paraded him through the streets, from Chepeside to Walbrook, from Walbrook to St. Paul's; for the news of Edward's arrival,

* Fabyan.

and the sudden agitation and excitement it produced on his enfeebled frame, had brought upon the poor king one of the epileptic attacks to which he had been subject from childhood, and which made the cause of his frequent imbecility; and, just recovered from such a fit—his eyes vacant—his face haggard—his head drooping, the spectacle of such an antagonist to the vigorous Edward, moved only pity in the few, and ridicule in the many. Two thousand Yorkist gentlemen were in the various sanctuaries; aided and headed by the Earl of Essex, they came forth armed and clamorous, scouring the streets, and shouting, "King Edward!" with impunity. Edward's popularity in London was heightened amongst the merchants by prudent reminiscences of the vast debts he had incurred, which his victory only could ever enable him to repay to his good citizens.* The women, always, in such a movement, active partisans, and useful, deserted their hearths to canvass all strong arms and stout hearts for the handsome woman-lover.† The Yorkist Archbishop of Canterbury did his best with the ecclesiastics,—the Yorkist Recorder his best with the flat-caps. Alwyn, true to his anti-feudal principles, animated all the young freemen to support the merchant king—the favourer of commerce—*the man of his age!* The city authorities began to yield to their own and the general metropolitan predilections. But still the Archbishop of York had six thousand soldiers at his disposal, and London could be yet saved to Warwick, if the prelate acted with energy, and zeal, and good faith. That such was his first intention is clear, from his appeal to the public loyalty in King Henry's procession; but when he perceived how little effect that

* Commes. † Ibid.

pageant had produced—when, on re-entering the Bishop of London's palace, he saw before him the guileless, helpless puppet of contending factions, gasping for breath, scarcely able to articulate, the heartless prelate turned away, with a muttered ejaculation of contempt:—

"Clarence had not deserted," said he to himself, "unless he saw greater profit with King Edward!" And then he began to commune with himself, and to commune with his brother-prelate of Canterbury; and in the midst of all this commune arrived Catesby, charged with messages to the archbishop from Edward —messages full of promise and affection on the one hand—of menace and revenge upon the other. Brief, —Warwick's cup of bitterness had not yet been filled; that night the archbishop and the mayor of London met, and the Tower was surrendered to Edward's friends;—the next day Edward and his army entered, amidst the shouts of the populace—rode to St. Paul's, where the archbishop * met him, leading Henry by the hand, again a captive; thence Edward proceeded to Westminster Abbey, and, fresh from his atrocious perjury at York, offered thanksgivings for its success. The Sanctuary yielded up its royal fugitives, and, in joy and in pomp, Edward led his wife and her newborn babe, with Jacquetta and his elder children, to Baynard's Castle.

The next morning (the third day), true to his promise, Warwick marched towards London with the mighty armament he had now collected. Treason had

* Sharon Turner. It is a comfort to think that this archbishop was, two years afterwards, first robbed, and then imprisoned, by Edward IV.; nor did he recover his liberty till a few weeks before his death, in 1476 (five years subsequently to the battle of Barnet).

done its work—the metropolis was surrendered, and King Henry in the Tower.

"These things considered," says the chronicler, "the earl saw that all calculations of necessity were brought to this end,—that they must now be committed to the hazard and chance of one battle." * He halted, therefore, at St. Alban's, to rest his troops; and marching thence towards Barnet, pitched his tents on the upland ground, then called the Heath or Chase of Gladsmoor, and waited the coming foe.

Nor did Edward linger long from that stern meeting. Entering London on the 11th of April, he prepared to quit it on the 13th. Besides the force he had brought with him, he had now recruits in his partisans from the sanctuaries and other hiding-places in the metropolis, while London furnished him, from her high-spirited youths, a gallant troop of bow and bill-men, whom Alwyn had enlisted, and to whom Edward willingly appointed, as captain, Alwyn himself;—who had atoned for his submission to Henry's restoration by such signal activity on behalf of the young king, whom he associated with the interests of his class, and the weal of the great commercial city, which some years afterwards rewarded his affection by electing him to her chief magistracy.†

It was on that very day, the 13th of April, some hours before the departure of the York army, that Lord Hastings entered the Tower, to give orders relative to the removal of the unhappy Henry, whom Edward had resolved to take with him on his march.

* Hall.

† Nicholas Alwyn, the representative of that generation which aided the commercial and anti-feudal policy of Edward IV. and Richard III., and welcomed its consummation under their Tudor successor, rose to be Lord Mayor of London in the fifteenth year of the reign of Henry VII.—*Fabyan.*

And as he had so ordered, and was about to return, Alwyn, emerging from one of the interior courts, approached him in much agitation, and said thus—"Pardon me, my lord, if in so grave an hour I recall your attention to one you may haply have forgotten."

"Ah, the poor maiden; but you told me, in the hurried words that we have already interchanged, that she was safe and well."

"Safe, my lord—not well. Oh, hear me. I depart to battle for your cause and your king's. A gentleman in your train has advised me that you are married to a noble dame in the foreign land. If so, this girl whom I have loved so long and truly, may yet forget you—may yet be mine. Oh, give me that hope, to make me a braver soldier."

"But," said Hastings, embarrassed, and with a changing countenance, "but time presses, and I know not where the demoiselle——"

"She is here," interrupted Alwyn; "here, within these walls—in yonder courtyard. I have just left her. *You,* whom she loves, forgot her! *I,* whom she disdains, remembered. I went to see to her safety—to counsel her to rest here for the present, whatever betides: and, at every word I said, she broke in upon me but with one name—that name was thine! And when stung, and in the impulse of the moment, I exclaimed, —'He deserves not this devotion. They tell me, Sibyll, that Lord Hastings has found a wife in exile'—oh, that look! that cry! they haunt me still. 'Prove it—prove it, Alwyn,' she cried. 'And—' I interrupted, 'and thou couldst yet, for thy father's sake, be true wife to me?'"

"Her answer, Alwyn?"

"It was this—'For my father's sake, only, then,

could I live on; and—' her sobs stopped her speech, till she cried again, 'I believe it not! thou hast deceived me. Only from his lips will I hear the sentence.' Go to her, manfully and frankly, as becomes you, high lord—go! It is but a single sentence thou hast to say, and thy heart will be the lighter, and thine arm the stronger, for those honest words."

Hastings pulled his cap over his brow, and stood a moment as if in reflection; he then said, "Show me the way; thou art right. It is due to her and to thee; and as, by this hour to-morrow, my soul may stand before the Judgment-seat, that poor child's pardon may take one sin from the large account."

CHAPTER II

SHARP IS THE KISS OF THE FALCON'S BEAK

Hastings stood in the presence of the girl to whom he had pledged his troth. They were alone; but in the next chamber might be heard the peculiar sound made by the mechanism of the Eureka. Happy and lifeless mechanism, which moves, and toils, and strives on, to change the destiny of millions, but hath neither ear, nor eye, nor sense, nor heart,—the avenues of pain to man! She had—yes, literally—she had recognised her lover's step upon the stair, she had awakened at once from that dull and icy lethargy with which the words of Alwyn had chained life and soul. She sprang forward as Hastings entered—she threw herself, in delirious joy, upon his bosom. "Thou art come—thou art! It is not true—not true. Heaven bless thee!—thou art come!" But sudden as the movement, was the recoil. Drawing her-

self back, she gazed steadily on his face, and said—"Lord Hastings, they tell me thy hand is another's. *Is* it true?"

"Hear me!" answered the nobleman. "When first I——"

"Oh, God!—oh, God! he answers not—he falters. Speak! Is it true?"

"It is true. I am wedded to another."

Sibyll did not fall to the ground, nor faint, nor give vent to noisy passion. But the rich colour which before had been varying and fitful, deserted her cheek, and left it of an ashen whiteness; the lips, too, grew tightly compressed, and her small fingers, interlaced, were clasped with strained and convulsive energy, so that the quivering of the very arms was perceptible. In all else she seemed composed, as she said, "I thank you, my lord, for the simple truth—no more is needed. Heaven bless you and yours! Farewell!"

"Stay!—you shall—you must hear me on. Thou knowest how dearly in youth I loved Katherine Nevile. In manhood the memory of that love haunted me, but beneath thy sweet smile, I deemed it, at last, effaced; I left thee to seek the king, and demand his assent to our union. I speak not of obstacles that then arose;—in the midst of them I learned Katherine was lone and widowed—was free. At her own summons, I sought her presence, and learned that she had loved me ever—loved me still. The intoxication of my early dream returned—reverse and exile followed close—Katherine left her state, her fortunes, her native land, and followed the banished man, and so memory, and gratitude, and destiny concurred, and the mistress of my youth became my wife. None other could have replaced thy image—none other have made me forget the

faith I pledged thee. The thought of thee has still pursued me—will pursue me to the last. I dare not say *now* that I love thee still, but yet——." He paused, but rapidly resumed, "Enough, enough—dear art thou to me, and honoured—dearer, more honoured than a sister. Thank Heaven, at least, and thine own virtue, my falsehood leaves thee pure and stainless. Thy hand may yet bless a worthier man. If our cause triumphs, thy fortunes, thy father's fate, shall be my fondest care. Never—never will my sleep be sweet, and my conscience laid to rest, till I hear thee say, as honoured wife—perchance, as blessed and blessing mother—'False one, I am happy!'"

A cold smile, at these last words, flitted over the girl's face—the smile of a broken heart—but it vanished, and with that strange mixture of sweetness and pride—mild and forgiving, yet still spirited and firm—which belonged to her character, she nerved herself to the last and saddest effort to preserve dignity and conceal despair. "Farther words, my lord, are idle—I am rightly punished for a proud folly. Let not woman love above her state. Think no more of my destiny."

"No, no," interrupted the remorseful lord, "thy destiny must haunt me till thou hast chosen one with a better right to protect thee."

At the repetition of that implied desire to transfer *her* also to another—a noble indignation came to mar the calm for which she had hitherto not vainly struggled. "Oh, man!" she exclaimed, with passion, "does thy deceit give me the right to deceive another? I—I wed!—I—I—vow at the altar—a love dead, dead for ever—dead as my own heart! Why dost thou mock me with the hollow phrase, 'Thou art pure and stainless?' Is the virginity of the soul still left? Do the

tears I have shed for thee—doth the thrill of my heart when I heard thy voice—doth the plighted kiss that burns, burns now into my brow, and on my lips—do these, these leave me free to carry to a new affection the cinders and ashes of a soul thou hast ravaged and deflowered? Oh, coarse and rude belief of men,—that naught is lost, if the mere form be pure! The freshness of the first feelings, the bloom of the sinless thought, the sigh, the blush of the devotion—never, never felt but once! these, these make the true dower a maiden should bring to the hearth to which she comes as wife. Oh, taunt!—Oh, insult! to speak to me of happiness—of the altar! Thou never knewest, lord, how I really loved thee!" And for the first time, a violent gush of tears came to relieve her heart.

Hastings was almost equally overcome. Well experienced as he was in those partings, when maids reproach and gallants pray for pardon, but still sigh—"Farewell,"—he had now no words to answer that burst of uncontrollable agony, and he felt at once humbled and relieved, when Sibyll again, with one of those struggles which exhaust years of life, and almost leave us callous to all after-trial, pressed back the scalding tears, and said, with unnatural sweetness—"Pardon me, my lord—I meant not to reproach—the words escaped me—think of them no more. I would fain, at least, part from you now as I had once hoped to part from you at the last hour of life—without one memory of bitterness and anger, so that my conscience, whatever its other griefs, might say,—'My lips never belied my heart—my words never pained him!' And now then, Lord Hastings, in all charity, we part. Farewell, for ever, and for ever! Thou hast wedded one who loves thee, doubtless, as tenderly as I had done.

Ah! cherish that affection! There are times even in thy career, when a little love is sweeter than much fame. If thou thinkest I have aught to pardon thee, now with my whole heart I pray, as while life is mine that prayer shall be murmured—'Heaven forgive this man, as I do! Heaven make his home the home of peace, and breathe into those now near and dear to him, the love and the faith that I once——.'" She stopped, for the words choked her, and, hiding her face, held out her hand, in sign of charity and of farewell.

"Ah! if I dared pray like thee," murmured Hastings, pressing his lips upon that burning hand, "how should I weary Heaven to repair, by countless blessings, the wrong which I have done thee. And Heaven will—oh, it surely will!"—He pressed the hand to his heart, dropped it, and was gone.

In the courtyard he was accosted by Alwyn—

"Thou hast been frank, my lord?"

"I have."

"And she bears it, and——"

"See how *she* forgives and how *I* suffer!" said Hastings, turning his face towards his rival; and Alwyn saw that the tears were rolling down his cheeks —"Question me no more."

There was a long silence.—They quitted the precincts of the Tower, and were at the river-side. Hastings waving his hand to Alwyn, was about to enter the boat which was to bear him to the war council assembled at Baynard's Castle, when the trader stopped him, and said anxiously—

"Think you not, for the present, the Tower is the safest asylum for Sibyll and her father? If we fail and Warwick returns, they are protected by the earl; if we triumph, thou wilt insure their safety from all foes?"

"Surely:—in either case, their present home is the most secure."

The two men then parted; and not long afterwards, Hastings, who led the on-guard, was on his way towards Barnet: with him also went the foot volunteers under Alwyn. The army of York was on its march. Gloucester, to whose vigilance and energy were left the final preparations, was necessarily the last of the generals to quit the city. And suddenly, while his steed was at the gate of Baynard's Castle, he entered, armed *cap-à-pie*, into the chamber where the Duchess of Bedford sat with her grandchildren: "Madame," said he, "I have a grace to demand from you, which will, methinks, not be displeasing. My lieutenants report to me that an alarm has spread amongst my men—a religious horror of some fearful bombards and guns which have been devised by a sorcerer in Lord Warwick's pay. Your famous Friar Bungey has been piously amongst them, promising, however, that the mists which now creep over the earth shall last through the night and the early morrow; and if he deceive us not, we may post our men so as to elude the hostile artillery. But, sith the friar is so noted and influential, and sith there is a strong fancy that the winds which have driven back Margaret obeyed his charm, the soldiers clamour out for him to attend us, and, on the very field itself, counteract the spells of the Lancastrian nigromancer. The good friar, more accustomed to fight with fiends than men, is daunted, and resists. As much may depend on his showing us good will, and making our fellows suppose we have the best of the witchcraft, I pray you to command his attendance, and cheer up his courage. He waits without."

"A most notable—a most wise advice, beloved Richard!" cried the duchess. "Friar Bungey is, indeed, a potent man. I will win him at once to your will;" and the duchess hurried from the room.

The friar's bodily fears, quieted at last by assurances that he should be posted in a place of perfect safety during the battle, and his avarice excited by promises of the amplest rewards, he consented to accompany the troops, upon one stipulation—viz., that the atrocious wizard, who had so often baffled his best spells—the very wizard who had superintended the accursed bombards, and predicted Edward's previous defeat and flight (together with the diabolical invention, in which all the malice and strength of his sorcery were centred), might, according to Jacquetta's former promise, be delivered forthwith to his mercy, and accompany him to the very spot where he was to dispel and counteract the Lancastrian nigromancer's enchantments. The duchess, too glad to purchase the friar's acquiescence on such cheap terms, and to whose superstitious horror for Adam's lore in the black art was now added a purely political motive for desiring him to be made away with—inasmuch as in the Sanctuary she had, at last, extorted from Elizabeth the dark secret which might make him a very dangerous witness against the interests and honour of Edward—readily and joyfully consented to this proposition.

A strong guard was at once despatched to the Tower with the friar himself, followed by a covered waggon, which was to serve for conveyance to Bungey and his victim.

In the meanwhile, Sibyll, after remaining for some time in the chamber which Hastings had abandoned to her solitary woe, had passed to the room in which her father held mute commune with his Eureka.

The machine was now thoroughly completed;—improved and perfected, to the utmost art the inventor ever could attain. Thinking that the prejudice against it might have arisen from its uncouth appearance, the poor philosopher had sought now to give it a gracious and imposing appearance. He had painted and gilt it with his own hands—it looked bright and gaudy in its gay hues; its outward form was worthy of the precious and propitious jewel which lay hidden in its centre.

"See, child—see!" said Adam; "is it not beautiful and comely?"

"My dear father, yes!" answered the poor girl, as still she sought to smile; then, after a short silence, she continued—"Father, of late, methinks, I have too much forgotten thee; pardon me, if so. Henceforth, I have no care in life but thee—henceforth let me ever, when thou toilest, come and sit by thy side. I would not be alone;—*I dare not!* Father—father! God shield thy harmless life! I have nothing to love under heaven but thee!"

The good man turned wistfully, and raised, with tremulous hands, the sad face that had pressed itself on his bosom. Gazing thereon mournfully, he said—"Some new grief hath chanced to thee, my child. Methought I heard another voice besides thine in yonder room. Ah! has Lord Hastings——"

"Father, spare me!—thou wert too right—thou didst judge too wisely—Lord Hastings is wedded to another! But see, I can smile still—I am calm. My heart will not break so long as it hath thee to love and pray for!"

She wound her arms round him as she spoke, and he roused himself from his world out of earth again.

Though he could bring no comfort, there was something, at least, to the forlorn one, in his words of love—in his tears of pity.

They sat down together, side by side, as the evening darkened—the Eureka forgotten in the hour of its perfection! They noted not the torches which flashed below, reddened at intervals the walls of their chamber, and gave a glow to the gay gilding and bright hues of the gaudy model. Yet those torches flickered round the litter that was to convey Henry the Peaceful to the battle-field, which was to decide the dynasty of his realm! The torches vanished, and forth from the dark fortress went the captive king.

Night succeeded to eve, when again the red glare shot upward on the Eureka, playing with fantastic smile on its quaint aspect—steps and voices, and the clatter of arms, sounded in the yard, on the stairs, in the adjoining chamber—and suddenly the door was flung open, and, followed by some half-score soldiers, strode in the terrible friar.

"Aha, Master Adam! who is the greater nigromancer now? Seize him!—Away! And help you, Master Sergeant, to bear this piece of the foul fiend's cunning devising. Ho, ho! see you how it is tricked out and furbished up—all for the battle, I warrant ye!"

The soldiers had already seized upon Adam, who, stupefied by astonishment rather than fear, uttered no sound, and attempted no struggle. But it was in vain they sought to tear from him Sibyll's clinging and protecting arms. A supernatural strength, inspired by a kind of superstition that no harm could chance to him while she was by, animated her slight form; and fierce though the soldiers were, they shrunk from actual and brutal violence to one thus young and fair. Those

small hands clung so firmly, that it seemed that nothing but the edge of the sword could sever the child's clasp from the father's neck.

"Harm him not—harm him at your peril, friar!" she cried, with flashing eyes. "Tear him from me, and if King Edward win the day, Lord Hastings shall have thy life; if Lord Warwick, thy days are numbered, too. Beware, and avaunt!"

The friar was startled. He had forgotten Lord Hastings in the zest of his revenge. He feared that, if Sibyll were left behind, the tale she might tell would indeed bring on him a powerful foe in the daughter's lover—on the other hand, should Lord Warwick get the better, what vengeance would await her appeal to the great protector of her father! He resolved, therefore, on the instant, to take Sibyll as well as her father; and if the fortune of the day allowed him to rid himself of Warner, a good occasion might equally occur to dispose for ever of the testimony of Sibyll. He had already formed a cunning calculation in desiring Warner's company; for while, should Edward triumph, the sacrifice of the hated Warner was resolved upon, yet, should the earl get the better, he could make a merit to Warner that he (the friar) had not only spared, but saved, his life, in making him his companion. It was in harmony with this double policy that the friar mildly answered to Sibyll—

"Tush! my daughter! Perhaps if your father be true to King Edward, and aid my skill instead of obstructing it, he may be none the worse for the journey he must take; and if thou likest to go with him, there's room in the vehicle, and the more the merrier. Harm them not, soldiers—no doubt they will follow quietly."

As he said this, the men, after first crossing them-

selves, had already hoisted up the Eureka; and when Adam saw it borne from the room, he instinctively followed the bearers. Sibyll, relieved by the thought that, for weal or for woe, she should, at least, share her father's fate, and scarce foreboding much positive danger from the party which contained Hastings and Alwyn, attempted no further remonstrance.

The Eureka was placed in the enormous vehicle—it served as a barrier between the friar and his prisoners.

The friar, as soon as the waggon was in motion, addressed himself civilly enough to his fellow-travellers, and assured them there was nothing to fear, unless Adam thought fit to disturb his incantations. The captives answered not his address, but nestled close to each other, interchanging, at intervals, words of comfort, and recoiling as far as possible from the extregetour, who, having taken with him a more congenial companion, in the shape of a great leathern bottle, finally sunk into the silent and complacent doze which usually rewards the libations to the Bromian god.

The vehicle, with many other baggage-waggons in the rear of the army, in that memorable night-march, moved mournfully on; the night continued wrapped in fog and mist, agreeably to the weatherwise predictions of the friar; the rumbling groan of the vehicle, the tramp of the soldiers, the dull rattle of their arms, with now and then the neigh of some knight's steed in the distance, were the only sounds that broke the silence, till once, as they neared their destination, Sibyll started from her father's bosom, and shudderingly thought she recognised the hoarse chant and the tinkling bells of the ominous tymbesteres.

CHAPTER III

A PAUSE

In the profound darkness of the night and the thick fog, Edward had stationed his men at a venture upon the heath at Gladsmoor,* and hastily environed the camp with palisades and trenches. He had intended to have rested immediately in front of the foe, but, in the darkness, mistook the extent of the hostile line, and his men were ranged only opposite to the *left* side of the earl's force (towards Hadley), leaving the right unopposed. Most fortunate for Edward was this mistake; for Warwick's artillery, and the new and deadly bombards he had constructed, were placed in the *right* of the earl's army; and the provident earl, naturally supposing Edward's left was there opposed to him, ordered his gunners to cannonade all night. Edward, "as the flashes of the guns illumined by fits the gloom of midnight, saw the advantage of his unintentional error; and to prevent Warwick from discovering it, reiterated his orders for the most profound silence." † Thus even his very blunders favoured Edward more than the wisest precautions had served his fated foe.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April, the Easter Sabbath. In the fortunes of that day were involved those of all the persons who hitherto, in the course of this narrative, may have seemed to move in separate orbits from the fiery star of Warwick. Now, in this crowning hour, the vast and gigantic destiny of the great earl compre-

* Edward "had the greater number of men."—*Hall*, p. 296.
† Sharon Turner.

hended all upon which its darkness or its light had fallen: not only the luxurious Edward, the perjured Clarence, the haughty Margaret, her gallant son, the gentle Anne, the remorseful Isabel, the dark guile of Gloucester, the rising fortunes of the gifted Hastings, —but on the hazard of that die rested the hopes of Hilyard, and the interests of the trader Alwyn, and the permanence of that frank, chivalric, hardy, still half Norman race, of which Nicholas Alwyn and his Saxon class were the rival antagonistic principle, and Marmaduke Nevile the ordinary type. Dragged inexorably into the whirlpool of that mighty fate, were even the very lives of the simple Scholar—of his obscure and devoted child. Here, into this gory ocean, all scattered rivulets and streams had hastened to merge at last.

But grander and more awful than all individual interests were those assigned to the fortunes of this battle, so memorable in the English annals;—the ruin or triumph of a dynasty;—the fall of that warlike baronage, of which Richard Nevile was the personation—the crowning flower—the greatest representative and the last—associated with memories of turbulence and excess, it is true, but with the proudest and grandest achievements in our early history—with all such liberty as had been yet achieved since the Norman Conquest—with all such glory as had made the island famous,—here with Runnymede, and there with Cressy! —the rise of a crafty, plotting, imperious Despotism, based upon the growing sympathy of craftsmen and traders, and ripening on the one hand to the Tudor tyranny, the Republican reaction under the Stuarts, the slavery, and the civil war—but, on the other hand, to the concentration of all the vigour and life of genius

into a single and strong government, the graces, the arts, the letters of a polished court, the freedom, the energy, the resources of a commercial population destined to rise above the tyranny at which it had first connived, and give to the emancipated Saxon the markets of the world. Upon the victory of that day, all these contending interests—this vast alternative in the future—swayed and trembled. Out, then, upon that vulgar craving of those who comprehend neither the vast truths of life, nor the grandeur of ideal art, and who ask from poet or narrator the poor and petty morality of "Poetical Justice"—a justice existing not in our work-day world—a justice existing not in the sombre page of history—a justice existing not in the loftier conceptions of men whose genius has grappled with the enigmas which art and poetry only can foreshadow and divine:—unknown to us in the street and the market—unknown to us on the scaffold of the patriot, or amidst the flames of the martyr—unknown to us in the Lear and the Hamlet—in the Agamemnon and the Prometheus. Millions upon millions, ages upon ages, are entered but as items in the vast account in which the recording angel sums up the unerring justice of God to man.

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. And on that very day Margaret and her son, and the wife and daughter of Lord Warwick, landed, at last, on the shores of England.* Come they for joy, or for woe—for victory, or despair? The issue of this day's fight on the Heath of Gladsmoor will decide. Prank thy halls, O Westminster, for the triumph of the Lancastrian king—or open thou, O

* Margaret landed at Weymouth; Lady Warwick, at Portsmouth.

Grave, to receive the saint-like Henry and his noble son. The king-maker goes before ye, saint-like father and noble son, to prepare your thrones amongst the living, or your mansions amongst the dead!

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE

Raw, cold, and dismal dawned the morning of the fourteenth of April. The heavy mist still covered both armies, but their hum and stir was already heard through the gloaming,—the neighing of steeds, and the clangour of mail. Occasionally a movement of either force made dim form, seeming gigantic through the vapour, indistinctly visible to the antagonist army; and there was something ghastly and unearth-like in these ominous shapes, suddenly seen, and suddenly vanishing, amidst the sullen atmosphere. By this time, Warwick had discovered the mistake of his gunners; for, to the right of the earl, the silence of the Yorkists was still unbroken, while abruptly, from the thick gloom to the left, broke the hoarse mutter and low growl of the awakening war. Not a moment was lost by the earl in repairing the error of the night: his artillery wheeled rapidly from the right wing, and, sudden as a storm of lightning, the fire from the cannon flashed through the dun and heavy vapour: and not far from the very spot where Hastings was marshalling the wing intrusted to his command, made a deep chasm in the serried ranks. Death had begun his feast!

At that moment, however, from the centre of the

Yorkist army, arose, scarcely drowned by the explosion, that deep-toned shout of enthusiasm, which he who has once heard it, coming, as it were, from the one heart of an armed multitude, will ever recall as the most kindling and glorious sound which ever quickened the pulse and thrilled the blood,—for along that part of the army now rode King Edward. His mail was polished as a mirror, but otherwise unadorned, resembling that which now invests his effigies at the Tower,* and the housings of his steed were spangled with silver suns, for the silver sun was the cognisance on all his banners. His head was bare, and through the hazy atmosphere the gold of his rich locks seemed literally to shine. Followed by his body squire, with his helm and lance, and the lords in his immediate staff, his truncheon in his hand, he passed slowly along the steady line, till, halting where he deemed his voice could be farthest heard, he reined in, and lifting his hand, the shout of the soldiery was hushed,—though still, while he spoke, from Warwick's archers came the arrowy shower, and still the gloom was pierced and the hush interrupted by the flash and the roar of the bombards.

"Englishmen and friends," said the martial chief, "to bold deeds go but few words. Before you is the foe! From Ravenspur to London I have marched—treason flying from my sword, loyalty gathering to my standard. With but two thousand men, on the fourteenth of March, I entered England—on the fourteenth of April, fifty thousand is my muster-roll. Who shall say, then, that I am not king, when one month mans

* The suit of armour, however, which the visitor to the Royal Armoury is expected to believe King Edward could have worn, is infinitely too small for such credulity. Edward's height was six feet two inches.

a monarch's army from his subjects' love? And well know ye, now, that my cause is yours and England's! Those against us are men who would rule in despite of law—barons whom I gorged with favours, and who would reduce this fair realm of King, Lords, and Commons, to be the appanage and property of one man's measureless ambition—the park, forsooth, the homestead to Lord Warwick's private house! Ye gentlemen and knights of England, let them and their rabble prosper, and your properties will be despoiled—your lives insecure—all law struck dead. What differs Richard of Warwick from Jack Cade, save that if his name is nobler, so is his treason greater? Commoners and soldiers of England—freemen, however humble—what do these rebel lords (who would rule in the name of Lancaster) desire? To reduce you to villeins and to bondsmen, as your forefathers were to them. Ye owe freedom from the barons to the just laws of my sires, your kings. Gentlemen and knights, commoners and soldiers, Edward IV. upon his throne will not profit by a victory more than you. This is no war of dainty chivalry—it is a war of true men against false. No quarter! Spare not either knight or hilding. Warwick, forsooth, will not smite the commons. Truly not—the rabble are his friends. I say to you——" and Edward, pausing in the excitement and sanguinary fury of his tiger nature—the soldiers, heated like himself to the thirst of blood, saw his eyes sparkle, and his teeth gnash, as he added in a deeper and lower, but not less audible voice, "I say to you, SLAY ALL!* What heel spares the viper's brood?"

"We will—we will!" was the horrid answer, which came hissing and muttered forth from morion and cap of steel.

* Hall.

"Hark! to their bombards!" resumed Edward. "The enemy would fight from afar, for they excel us in their archers and gunners. Upon them, then—hand to hand, and man to man! Advance banners—sound trumpets! Sir Oliver, my basinet! Soldiers, if my standard falls, look for the plume upon your king's helmet! Charge!"

Then, with a shout wilder and louder than before, on through the hail of the arrows—on through the glare of the bombards—rather with a rush than in a march, advanced Edward's centre against the array of Somerset. But from a part of the encampment where the circumvallation seemed strongest, a small body of men moved not with the general body.

To the left of the churchyard of Hadley, at this day, the visitor may notice a low wall; on the other side of that wall is a garden, then but a rude eminence on Gladsmoor Heath. On that spot a troop in complete armour, upon destries pawing impatiently, surrounded a man upon a sorry palfrey, and in a gown of blue—the colour of royalty and of servitude,—that man was Henry the Sixth. In the same space stood Friar Bungey, his foot on the Eureka, muttering incantations, that the mists he had foretold,* and which had protected the Yorkists from the midnight guns, might yet last, to the confusion of the foe. And near him, under a gaunt, leafless tree, a rope round his neck, was Adam Warner—Sibyll, still faithful to his side, nor shuddering at the arrows and the guns—her whole

* Lest the reader should suppose that the importance of Friar Bungey upon this bloody day has been exaggerated by the narrator, we must cite the testimony of sober Alderman Fabyan:—"Of the mists and other impediments which fell upon the lords' party, by reason of the incantations wrought by Friar Bungey, as the fame went, we list not to write."

fear concentrated upon the sole life for which her own was prized. Upon this eminence, then, these lookers-on stood aloof. And the meek ears of Henry heard through the fog the inexplicable, sullen, jarring clash, —steel had met steel.

"Holy Father!" exclaimed the kingly saint, "and this is the Easter Sabbath, thy most solemn day of peace!"

"Be silent," thundered the friar, "thou disturbest my spells. *Barabbarara—Santhinoa—Foggibus increscebo—confusio inimicis—Garabbora, vapor et mistes!*"

We must now rapidly survey the dispositions of the army under Warwick. In the right wing, the command was intrusted to the Earl of Oxford and the Marquis of Montagu. The former, who led the cavalry of that division, was stationed in the van; the latter, according to his usual habit—surrounded by a strong body-guard of knights and a prodigious number of squires as aides-de-camp—remained at the rear, and directed thence, by his orders, the general movement. In this wing the greater number were Lancastrian, jealous of Warwick, and only consenting to the generalship of Montagu, because shared by their favourite hero, Oxford. In the mid-space lay the chief strength of the bowmen, with a goodly number of pikes and bills, under the Duke of Somerset; and this division also was principally Lancastrian, and shared the jealousy of Oxford's soldiery. The left wing, composed for the most of Warwick's yeomanry and retainers, was commanded by the Duke of Exeter, conjointly with the earl himself. Both armies kept a considerable body in reserve, and Warwick, besides this resource, had selected from his own retainers a band

of picked archers, whom he had skilfully placed in the outskirts of a wood that then stretched from Wrotham Park to the column that now commemorates the battle of Barnet, on the high northern road. He had guarded these last-mentioned archers (where exposed in front to Edward's horsemen) by strong tall barricades, leaving only such an opening as would allow one horseman at a time to pass, and defending by a formidable line of pikes this narrow opening left for communication, and to admit to a place of refuge in case of need. These dispositions made, and ere yet Edward had advanced on Somerset, the earl rode to the front of the wing under his special command, and, agreeably to the custom of the time, observed by his royal foe, harangued the troops. Here were placed those who loved him as a father, and venerated him as something superior to mortal man—here the retainers who had grown up with him from his childhood—who had followed him to his first fields of war—who had lived under the shelter of his many castles, and fed in that rude equality of a more primæval age, which he loved still to maintain, at his lavish board. And now Lord Warwick's coal-black steed halted, motionless in the van. His squire behind bore his helmet, overshadowed by the eagle of Monthermer, the outstretched wings of which spread wide into sable plumes: and as the earl's noble face turned full and calm upon the bristling lines, there arose not the vulgar uproar that greeted the aspect of the young Edward. By one of those strange sympathies which pass through multitudes, and seize them with a common feeling, the whole body of those adoring vassals became suddenly aware of the change which a year had made in the face of their chief and father. They saw the grey flakes in his Jove-like curls

—the furrows in that lofty brow—the hollows in that bronzed and manly visage, which had seemed to their rude admiration to wear the stamp of the twofold Divinity—Beneficence and Valour. A thrill of tenderness and awe shot through the veins of every one—tears of devotion rushed into many a hardy eye. No —*there* was not the ruthless captain addressing his hireling butchers; it *was* the chief and father rallying gratitude, and love, and reverence, to the crisis of his stormy fate.

"My friends, my followers, and my children," said the earl, "the field we have entered is one from which there is no retreat; here must your leader conquer, or here die. It is not a parchment pedigree—it is not a name, derived from the ashes of dead men, that make the only charter of a king. We Englishmen were but slaves, if, in giving crown and sceptre to a mortal like ourselves, we asked not in return the kingly virtues. Beset, of old, by evil counsellors, the reign of Henry VI. was obscured, and the weal of the realm endangered. Mine own wrongs seemed to me great, but the disasters of my country not less. I deemed that in the race of York, England would know a wiser and happier rule. What was, in this, mine error, ye partly know. A prince dissolved in luxurious vices—a nobility degraded by minions and blood-suckers—a people plundered by purveyors, and a land disturbed by brawl and riot. But ye know not all: God makes man's hearth man's altar—our hearths were polluted—our wives and daughters were viewed as harlots—and lechery ruled the realm. A king's word should be fast as the pillars of the world. What man ever trusted Edward and was not deceived? Even now the unknightly liar stands in arms with the weight of

perjury on his soul. In his father's town of York, ye know that he took, three short weeks since, solemn oath of fealty to King Henry. And now King Henry is his captive, and King Henry's holy crown upon his traitor's head—'traitors' calls he Us? What name, then, rank enough for him? Edward gave the promise of a brave man, and I served him. He proved a base, a false, a licentious, and a cruel king, and I forsook him; may all free hearts in all free lands so serve kings when they become tyrants! Ye fight against a cruel and a torcious usurper, whose bold hand cannot sanctify a black heart—ye fight not only for King Henry, the meek and the godly—ye fight not for him alone, but for his young and princely son, the grandchild of Henry of Agincourt, who, old men tell me, has that hero's face, and who, I know, has that hero's frank and royal and noble soul—ye fight for the freedom of your land, for the honour of your women, for what is better than any king's cause—for justice and mercy—for truth and manhood's virtues against corruption in the laws, slaughter by the scaffold, falsehood in a ruler's lips, and shameless harlotry in the councils of ruthless power. The order I have ever given in war, I give now;—we war against the leaders of evil, not against the hapless tools—we war against our oppressors, not against our misguided brethren. Strike down every plumed crest, but when the strife is over, spare every common man! Hark! while I speak, I hear the march of your foe! Up standards!—blow trumpets! And now, as I brace my basinet, may God grant us all a glorious victory, or a glorious grave. On, my merry men! show these London loons the stout hearts of Warwickshire and Yorkshire. On, my merry men! A Warwick! a Warwick!"

As he ended, he swung lightly over his head the terrible battle-axe which had smitten down, as the grass before the reaper, the chivalry of many a field; and ere the last blast of the trumpets died, the troops of Warwick and of Gloucester met, and mingled hand to hand.

Although the earl had, on discovering the position of the enemy, moved some of his artillery from his right wing, yet there still lay the great number and strength of his force. And there, therefore, Montagu, rolling troop on troop to the aid of Oxford, pressed so overpoweringly upon the soldiers under Hastings, that the battle very soon wore a most unfavourable aspect for the Yorkists. It seemed, indeed, that the success which had always hitherto attended the military movements of Montagu, was destined for a crowning triumph. Stationed, as we have said, in the rear, with his light-armed squires, upon fleet steeds, around him, he moved the springs of the battle with the calm sagacity which at that moment no chief in either army possessed. Hastings was thoroughly outflanked, and though his men fought with great valour, they could not resist the weight of superior numbers.

In the midst of the carnage in the centre, Edward reined in his steed, as he heard the cry of victory in the gale—

"By heaven!" he exclaimed, "our men at the left are cravens—they fly! they fly!—Ride to Lord Hastings, Sir Humphrey Bourchier, bid him defile hither what men are left him; and now, ere our fellows are well aware what hath chanced yonder, charge we, knights and gentlemen, on, on!—break Somerset's line; on, on, to the heart of the rebel earl!"

Then, visor closed, lance in rest, Edward and his

cavalry dashed through the archers and billmen of Somerset; clad in complete mail, impervious to the weapons of the infantry, they slaughtered as they rode, and their way was marked by corpses and streams of blood. Fiercest and fellest of all, was Edward himself; when his lance shivered, and he drew his knotty mace from its sling by his saddle-bow, woe to all who attempted to stop his path. Vain alike steel helmet or leathern cap, jerkin or coat of mail. In vain Somerset threw himself into the *mêlée*. The instant Edward and his cavalry had made a path through the lines for his foot soldiery, the fortunes of the day were half retrieved. It was no rapid passage, pierced and reclosed, that he desired to effect, it was the wedge in the oak of war. There, rooted in the very midst of Somerset's troops, doubling on each side, passing on but to return again, where helm could be crashed and man overthrown, the mighty strength of Edward widened the breach more and more, till faster and faster poured in his bands, and the centre of Warwick's army seemed to reel and whirl round the broadening gap through its ranks,—as the waves round some chasm in a maëlstrom.

But in the interval, the hard-pressed troops commanded by Hastings were scattered and dispersed; driven from the field, they fled in numbers through the town of Barnet; many halted not till they reached London, where they spread the news of the earl's victory and Edward's ruin.*

Through the mist, Friar Bungey discerned the fugitive Yorkists under Hastings, and heard their cries of despair: through the mist, Sibyll saw, close beneath the intrenchments which protected the space on which

* Sharon Turner.

they stood, an armed horseman with the well-known crest of Hastings on his helmet, and, with lifted visor, calling his men to the return, in the loud voice of rage and scorn. And then, she herself sprang forwards, and forgetting his past cruelty in his present danger, cried his name—weak cry, lost in the roar of war! But the friar, now fearing he had taken the wrong side, began to turn from his spells, to address the most abject apologies to Adam, to assure him that he would have been slaughtered at the Tower, but for the friar's interruption; and that the rope round his neck was but an insignificant ceremony due to the prejudices of the soldiers. "Alas, Great Man," he concluded; "I see still that thou art mightier than I am; thy charms, though silent, are more potent than mine, though my lungs crack beneath them! *Confusio Inimicis Taralorolu*—I mean no harm to the earl,—*Garrabora, mistes et nubes;*—Lord, what will become of me!"

Meanwhile, Hastings, with a small body of horse, who being composed of knights and squires, specially singled out for the sword, fought with the pride of disdainful gentlemen, and the fury of desperate soldiers —finding it impossible to lure back the fugitives, hewed their own way through Oxford's ranks, to the centre, where they brought fresh aid to the terrible arm of Edward.

CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE

The mist still continued so thick that Montagu was unable to discern the general prospects of the field. But, calm and resolute in his post, amidst the arrows which whirled round him, and often struck, blunted against his Milan mail, the marquis received the reports of his aides-de-camp (may that modern word be pardoned?) as one after one they emerged through the fog to his side.

"Well," he said, as one of these messengers now spurred to the spot, "we have beaten off Hastings and his hirelings; but I see not 'the Silver Star' of Lord Oxford's banner." *

"Lord Oxford, my lord, has followed the enemy he routed to the farthest verge of the heath."

"Saints help us! Is Oxford thus headstrong? He will ruin all if he be decoyed from the field! Ride back, sir! Yet—hold!"—as another of the aides-de-camp appeared. "What news from Lord Warwick's wing?"

"Sore beset, bold marquis. Gloucester's line seems countless; it already outflanks the earl. The duke himself seems inspired by hell! Twice has his slight arm braved even the earl's battle-axe, which spared the boy but smote to the dust his comrades!"

"Well, and what of the centre, sir?" as a third form

* The Silver Star of the De Veres had its origin in a tradition that one of their ancestors, when fighting in the Holy Land saw a falling star descend upon his shield. Fatal to men, nobler even than the De Veres, was that silver falling star.

now arrived. "There rages Edward in person. He hath pierced into the midst. But Somerset still holds on gallantly!"

Montagu turned to the first aide-de-camp.

"Ride, sir! Quick! This to Oxford—No pursuit! Bid him haste, with all his men, to the left wing, and smite Gloucester in the rear. Ride, ride—for life and victory! If he come but in time, the day is ours!" *

The aide-de-camp darted off, and the mist swallowed up horse and horseman.

"Sound trumpets to the return!" said the marquis; —then, after a moment's musing—"Though Oxford hath drawn off our main force of cavalry, we have still some stout lances left; and Warwick must be strengthened. On to the earl! *Laissez aller!* A Montagu! a Montagu!" And lance in rest, the marquis and the knights immediately around him, and hitherto not personally engaged, descended the hillock at a hand gallop, and were met by a troop outnumbering their own, and commanded by the Lords D'Eyncourt and Say.

At this time, Warwick was indeed in the same danger that had routed the troops of Hastings; for, by a similar position, the strength of the hostile numbers being arrayed with Gloucester, the duke's troops had almost entirely surrounded him.† And Gloucester himself wondrously approved the trust that had consigned to his stripling arm the flower of the Yorkist army. Through the mists, the blood-red manteline he wore over his mail, the grinning teeth of the boar's head which crested his helmet, flashed and gleamed wherever his presence was most needed to encourage the flagging or spur on the fierce. And there seemed to both armies something ghastly and preternatural in

* Fabyan. † Sharon Turner.

the savage strength of this small, slight figure thus startlingly caparisoned, and which was heard evermore uttering its sharp war-cry—"Gloucester, to the onslaught! Down with the rebels, down!"

Nor did this daring personage disdain, in the midst of his fury, to increase the effect of valour by the art of a brain that never ceased to scheme on the follies of mankind. "See! see!" he cried, as he shot meteor-like from rank to rank. "See—these are no natural vapours! Yonder the mighty friar, who delayed the sails of Margaret, chants his spells to the Powers that ride the gale. Fear not the bombards—their enchanted balls swerve from the brave! The dark legions of Air fight for us! For the hour is come when the fiend shall rend his prey!" And fiendlike seemed the form thus screeching forth its predictions from under the grim head-gear; and then darting and disappearing amidst the sea of pikes, cleaving its path of blood!

But still the untiring might of Warwick defied the press of numbers that swept round him, tide upon tide. Through the mists, his black armour, black plume, black steed, gloomed forth like one thunder-cloud in the midst of a dismal heaven. The noble charger bore along that mighty rider, animating, guiding all, with as much ease and lightness as the racer bears its puny weight; the steed itself was scarce less terrible to encounter than the sweep of the rider's axe. Protected from arrow and lance by a coat of steel, the long chaffron or pike which projected from its barbed frontal dropped with gore as it scoured along. No line of men, however serried, could resist the charge of that horse and horseman. And vain even Gloucester's dauntless presence and thrilling battle-cry, when the stout earl was seen looming through the vapour, and

his cheerful shout was heard, "My merry men, fight on!"

For a third time, Gloucester, spurring forth from his recoiling and shrinking followers, bending low over his saddle-bow, covered by his shield, and with the tenth lance (his favourite weapon, because the one in which skill best supplied strength) he had borne that day, launched himself upon the vast bulk of his tremendous foe. With that dogged energy—that rapid calculation which made the basis of his character, and which ever clove through all obstacles at the one that, if destroyed, destroyed the rest,—in that, his first great battle, as in his last at Bosworth, he singled out the leader, and rushed upon the giant as the mastiff on the horns and dewlap of the bull. Warwick, in the broad space which his arm had made around him in the carnage, reined in as he saw the foe, and recognised the grisly cognisance and scarlet mantle of his godson. And even in that moment, with all his heated blood and his remembered wrong, and his imminent peril, his generous and lion heart felt a glow of admiration at the valour of the boy he had trained to arms—of the son of the beloved York. "His father little thought," muttered the earl, "that that arm should win glory against his old friend's life!" And as the half-uttered word died on his lips, the well-poised lance of Gloucester struck full upon his basinet, and, despite the earl's horsemanship and his strength, made him reel in his saddle, while the prince shot by, and suddenly wheeling round, cast away the shivered lance, and assailed him sword in hand.

"Back, Richard—boy, back!" said the earl, in a voice that sounded hollow through his helmet—"It is not against thee that my wrongs call for blood—pass on!"

"Not so, Lord Warwick," answered Richard, in a sobered, and almost solemn voice, dropping for the moment the point of his sword, and raising his visor, that he might be the better heard,—"On the field of battle all memories, sweet in peace, must die! St. Paul be my judge, that even in this hour I love you well; but I love renown and glory more. On the edge of my sword sit power and royalty, and what high souls prize most—ambition; these would nerve me against mine own brother's breast, were that breast my barrier to an illustrious future. Thou hast given thy daughter to another! I smite the father, to regain my bride. Lay on, and spare not!—for he who hates thee most would prove not so fell a foe as the man who sees his fortunes made or marred—his love crushed, or yet crowned, as this day's battle closes in triumph or defeat.—REBEL, DEFEND THYSELF!"

No time was left for further speech; for as Richard's sword descended, two of Gloucester's followers, Parr and Milwater by name, dashed from the halting lines at the distance, and bore down to their young prince's aid. At the same moment, Sir Marmaduke Nevile and the Lord Fitzhugh spurred from the opposite line; and thus encouraged, the band on either side came boldly forward, and the *mêlée* grew fierce and general. But still Richard's sword singled out the earl, and still the earl, parrying his blows, dealt his own upon meaner heads. Crushed by one swoop of the axe, fell Milwater to the earth—down, as again it swung on high, fell Sir Humphrey Bourchier, who had just arrived to Gloucester with messages from Edward, never uttered in the world below. Before Marmaduke's lance fell Sir Thomas Parr; and these three corpses making a barrier between Gloucester

and the earl, the duke turned fiercely upon Marmaduke, while the earl, wheeling round, charged into the midst of the hostile line, which scattered to the right and left.

"On! my merry men, on!" rang once more through the heavy air. "They give way—the London tailors,—on!" and on dashed, with their joyous cry, the merry men of Yorkshire and Warwick, the warrior-yeomen! Separated thus from his great foe, Gloucester, after unhorsing Marmaduke, galloped off to sustain that part of his following which began to waver and retreat before the rush of Warwick and his chivalry.

This, in truth, was the regiment recruited from the loyalty of London, and little accustomed, we trow, were the worthy heroes of Cockaigne, to the discipline of arms, nor trained to that stubborn resistance which makes, under skilful leaders, the English *peasants* the most enduring soldiery that the world has known since the day when the Roman sentinel perished amidst the falling columns and lava floods,* rather than, though society itself dissolved, forsake his post unbidden. "St. Thomas defend us!" muttered a worthy tailor, who in the flush of his valour, when safe in the Chepe, had consented to bear the rank of lieutenant—"it is not reasonable to expect men of pith and substance to be crushed into jellies, and carved into subtleties by horse-hoofs and pole-axes. Right about face! Fly!"—and throwing down his sword and shield, the lieutenant fairly took to his heels as he saw the charging column, headed by the raven steed of Warwick, come giant-like through the fog. The terror of one man is contagious, and the Londoners actually turned their backs, when Nicholas Alwyn cried, in his shrill voice

* At Pompeii.

and northern accent, "Out on you! What will the girls say of us in East-gate and the Chepe?—Hurrah for the bold hearts of London!—Round me, stout 'prentices! let the boys shame the men! This shaft for Cockaigne!" And as the troop turned irresolute, and Alwyn's arrow left his bow, they saw a horseman by the side of Warwick reel in his saddle and fall at once to the earth, and so great evidently was the rank of the fallen man, that even Warwick reined in, and the charge halted midway in its career. It was no less a person than the Duke of Exeter whom Alwyn's shaft had disabled for the field. This incident, coupled with the hearty address of the stout goldsmith, served to reanimate the flaggers, and Gloucester, by a circuitous route, reaching their line a moment after, they dressed their ranks, and a flight of arrows followed their loud "Hurrah for London Town!"

But the charge of Warwick had only halted, and (while the wounded Exeter was borne back by his squires to the rear) it dashed into the midst of the Londoners, threw their whole line into confusion, and drove them, despite all the efforts of Gloucester, far back along the plain. This well-timed exploit served to extricate the earl from the main danger of his position; and, hastening to improve his advantage, he sent forthwith to command the reserved forces under Lord St. John, the Knight of Lytton, Sir John Coniers, Dymoke, and Robert Hilyard, to bear down to his aid.

At this time Edward had succeeded, after a most stubborn fight, in effecting a terrible breach through Somerset's wing; and the fogs continued still so dense and mirk, that his foe itself—for Somerset had prudently drawn back to reform his disordered squadron—seemed vanished from the field. Halting now, as

through the dim atmosphere came from different quarters the many battle-cries of that feudal-day, by which alone he could well estimate the strength or weakness of those in the distance, his calmer genius as a general cooled, for a time, his individual ferocity of knight and soldier. He took his helmet from his brow to listen with greater certainty; and the lords and riders round him were well content to take breath and pause from the weary slaughter.

The cry of "Gloucester to the *onslaught!*" was heard no more. Feebler and feebler, scatteringly as it were, and here and there, the note had changed into "Gloucester to the *rescue!*"

Farther off rose, mingled and blent together, the opposing shouts—"A Montagu—a Montagu!"—"Strike for D'Eyncourt and King Edward!"—"A Say—a Say!"

"Ha!" said Edward, thoughtfully, "bold Gloucester fails—Montagu is bearing on to Warwick's aid—Say and D'Eyncourt stop his path. Our doom looks dark! Ride Hastings—ride; retrieve thy laurels, and bring up the reserve under Clarence. But harkye, leave not his side—he may desert again! Ho! ho! Again, 'Gloucester to the rescue!' Ah! how lustily sounds the cry of 'Warwick!' By the flaming sword of St. Michael, we will slacken that haughty shout, or be evermore dumb ourself, ere the day be an hour nearer to the eternal judgment!"

Deliberately, Edward rebraced his helm, and settled himself in his saddle, and with his knights riding close each to each, that they might not lose themselves in the darkness, regained his infantry and led them on to the quarter where the war now raged fiercest, round the black steed of Warwick and the blood-red mantelline of the fiery Richard.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE

It was now scarcely eight in the morning, though the battle had endured three hours; and, as yet, victory so inclined to the earl that nought but some dire mischance could turn the scale. Montagu had cut his way to Warwick; Somerset had re-established his array. The fresh vigour brought by the earl's reserve had well nigh completed his advantage over Gloucester's wing. The new infantry under Hilyard, the unexhausted riders under Sir John Coniers and his knightly compeers, were dealing fearful havoc, as they cleared the plain; and Gloucester, fighting inch by inch, no longer outnumbering but outnumbered, was driven nearer and nearer towards the town, when suddenly a pale, sickly, and ghost-like ray of sunshine, rather resembling the watery gleam of a waning moon than the radiance of the Lord of Light, broke through the mists, and showed to the earl's eager troops the banner and badges of a new array hurrying to the spot. "Behold," cried the young Lord Fitzhugh, "the standard and the badge of the Usurper—a silver sun! Edward himself is delivered into our hands! Upon them—bill and pike, lance and brand, shaft and bolt! Upon them, and crown the day!"

The same fatal error was shared by Hilyard, as he caught sight of the advancing troop, with their silvery cognisance. He gave the word, and every arrow left its string. At the same moment, as both horse and foot assailed the fancied foe, the momentary beam vanished from the heaven, the two forces mingled in

the sullen mists, when, after a brief conflict, a sudden and horrible cry of "*Treason—Treason!*" resounded from either band. The shining star of Oxford, returning from the pursuit, had been mistaken for Edward's cognisance of the sun.* Friend was slaughtering friend, and when the error was detected, each believed the other had deserted to the foe. In vain, here Montagu and Warwick, and there Oxford and his captains sought to dispel the confusion, and unite those whose blood had been fired against each other. While yet in doubt, confusion, and dismay, rushed full into the centre Edward of York himself, with his knights and riders; and his tossing banners, scarcely even yet distinguished from Oxford's starry ensigns, added to the general incertitude and panic. Loud in the midst rose Edward's trumpet voice, while *through* the midst, like one crest of foam upon a roaring sea, danced his plume of snow. Hark! again, again—near and nearer—the tramp of steeds, the clash of steel, the whiz and hiss of arrows, the shout of "Hastings to the onslaught!" Fresh, and panting for glory and for blood, came on King Edward's large reserve: from all the scattered parts of the field spurred the Yorkist knights, where the uproar, so much mightier than before, told them that the crisis of the war was come. Thither, as vultures to the carcase, they flocked and wheeled; thither D'Eyncourt and Lovell, and Cromwell's bloody sword, and Say's knotted mace; and thither, again rallying his late half-beaten myrmidons, the grim Gloucester, his helmet bruised and dinted, but the boar's teeth still gnashing wrath and horror from the grisly crest. But direst and most hateful of all in the eyes of the yet undaunted earl, thither, plainly visible, riding scarcely

* Cont. Croyl., 555; Fabyan, Habington, Hume, S. Turner.

a yard before him, with the cognisance of Clare wrought on his gay mantle, and in all the pomp and bravery of a holiday suit, came the perjured Clarence. Conflict now it could scarce be called: as well might the Dane have rolled back the sea from his footstool, as Warwick and his disordered troop (often and aye, dazzled here by Oxford's star, there by Edward's sun, dealing random blows against each other) have resisted the general whirl and torrent of the surrounding foe. To add to the rout, Somerset and the onguard of his wing had been marching towards the earl at the very time that the cry of "treason" had struck their ears, and Edward's charge was made: these men, nearly all Lancastrians, and ever doubting Montagu, if not Warwick, with the example of Clarence and the Archbishop of York, fresh before them, lost heart at once—Somerset himself headed the flight of his force.

"All is lost!" said Montagu, as side by side with Warwick the brothers fronted the foe, and for one moment stayed the rush.

"Not yet," returned the earl, "a band of my northern archers still guard yon wood—I know them—they will fight to the last gasp! Thither, then, with what men we may. You so marshal our soldiers, and I will make good the retreat. Where is Sir Marmaduke Nevile?"

"Here!"

"Horsed again, young cousin!—I give thee a perilous commission. Take the path down the hill; the mists thicken in the hollows, and may hide thee. Overtake Somerset—he hath fled westward, and tell him, from me, if he can yet rally but one troop of horse—but one—and charge Edward suddenly in the rear, he will yet redeem all. If he refuse, the ruin of his king, and

the slaughter of the brave men he deserts, be on his head! Swift,—*à tout bride*, Marmaduke. Yet one word," added the earl, in a whisper,—" If you fail with Somerset, come not back, make to the Sanctuary. *You* are too young to die, cousin! Away;—keep to the hollows of the chase."

As the knight vanished, Warwick turned to his comrades,—" Bold nephew Fitzhugh, and ye brave riders round me—so, we are fifty knights! Haste thou, Montagu, to the wood!—the wood!"

So noble in that hero age was the Individual MAN, even amidst the multitudes massed by war, that history vies with romance in showing how far a single sword could redress the scale of war. While Montagu, with rapid dexterity, and a voice yet promising victory, drew back the remnant of the lines, and in serried order retreated to the outskirts of the wood, Warwick and his band of knights protected the movement from the countless horsemen who darted forth from Edward's swarming and momently thickening ranks. Now dividing and charging singly—now rejoining—and breast to breast, they served to divert and perplex and harass the eager enemy. And never in all his wars, in all the former might of his indomitable arm, had Warwick so excelled the martial chivalry of his age, as in that eventful and crowning hour. Thrice almost alone, he penetrated into the very centre of Edward's bodyguard, literally felling to the earth all before him. Then perished by his battle-axe Lord Cromwell and the redoubted Lord of Say—then, no longer sparing even the old affection, Gloucester was hurled to the ground. The last time he penetrated even to Edward himself, smiting down the king's standard-bearer, unhorsing Hastings, who threw himself on his path; and Ed-

ward, setting his teeth in stern joy as he saw him, rose in his stirrups, and for a moment the mace of the king, the axe of the earl, met as thunder encounters thunder; but then a hundred knights rushed in to the rescue, and robbed the baffled avenger of his prey. Thus charging and retreating, driving back with each charge, farther and farther the mighty multitude hounding on to the lion's death, this great chief and his devoted knights, though terribly reduced in number, succeeded at last in covering Montagu's skilful retreat; and when they gained the outskirts of the wood, and dashed through the narrow opening between the barricades, the Yorkshire archers approved their lord's trust, and, shouting as to a marriage feast, hailed his coming.

But few, alas! of his fellow-horsemen had survived that marvellous enterprise of valour and despair. Of the fifty knights who had shared its perils, eleven only gained the wood; and, though in this number the most eminent (save Sir John Coniers, either slain or fled) might be found—their horses, more exposed than themselves, were for the most part wounded and unfit for further service. At this time the sun again, and suddenly as before, broke forth—not now with a feeble glimmer, but a broad and almost a cheerful beam, which sufficed to give a fuller view, than the day had yet afforded, of the state and prospects of the field.

To the right and to the left, what remained of the cavalry of Warwick were seen flying fast—gone the lances of Oxford, the bills of Somerset. Exeter, pierced by the shaft of Alwyn, was lying cold and insensible, remote from the contest, and deserted even by his squires.

In front of the archers, and such men as Montagu had saved from the sword, halted the immense and

murmuring multitude of Edward, their thousand banners glittering in the sudden sun; for, as Edward beheld the last wrecks of his foe, stationed near the covert, his desire of consummating victory and revenge made him cautious, and, fearing an ambush, he had abruptly halted.

When the scanty followers of the earl thus beheld the immense force arrayed for their destruction, and saw the extent of their danger and their loss—here the handful, there the multitude—a simultaneous exclamation of terror and dismay broke from their ranks.

"Children!" cried Warwick, "droop not!—Henry, at Agincourt, had worse odds than we!"

But the murmur among the archers, the lealest part of the earl's retainers, continued, till there stepped forth their captain, a grey old man, but still sinewy and unbent, the iron relic of a hundred battles.

"Back to your men, Mark Forester!" said the earl, sternly.

The old man obeyed not. He came on to Warwick, and fell on his knees beside his stirrup.

"Fly, my lord, escape is possible for you and your riders. Fly through the wood, we will screen your path with our bodies. Your children, father of your followers, your children of Middleham, ask no better fate than to die for you! Is it not so?" and the old man, rising, turned to those in hearing. They answered by a general acclamation.

"Mark Forester speaks well," said Montagu. "On you depends the last hope of Lancaster. We may yet join Oxford and Somerset! This way, through the wood—come!" and he laid his hand on the earl's rein.

"Knights and sirs," said the earl, dismounting, and partially raising his visor as he turned to the horse-

men, "let those who will, fly with Lord Montagu! Let those who, in a just cause, never despair of victory, nor, even at the worst, fear to face their Maker, fresh from the glorious death of heroes, dismount with me!" Every knight sprang from his steed, Montagu the first. "Comrades!" continued the earl, then addressing the retainers, "when the children fight for a father's honour, the father flies not from the peril into which he has drawn the children. What to me were life, stained by the blood of mine own beloved retainers, basely deserted by their chief? Edward has proclaimed that he will spare *none*. Fool! he gives us, then, the superhuman mightiness of despair! To your bows!—one shaft—if it pierce the joints of the tyrant's mail—one shaft may scatter yon army to the winds! Sir Marmaduke has gone to rally noble Somerset and his riders—if we make good our defence one little hour—the foe may be yet smitten in the rear, and the day retrieved! Courage and heart then!" Here the earl lifted his visor to the farthest bar, and showed his cheerful face—"Is this the face of a man who thinks all hope is gone?"

In this interval, the sudden sunshine revealed to King Henry, where he stood, the dispersion of his friends. To the rear of the palisades, which protected the spot where he was placed, already grouped "the lookers-on, and no fighters," * as the chronicler words it, who, as the guns slackened, ventured forth to learn the news, and who now, filling the churchyard of Hadley, strove hard to catch a peep of Henry the saint, or of Bungey the sorcerer. Mingled with these, gleamed the robes of the tymbesteres, pressing nearer and nearer to the barriers, as wolves, in the instinct of blood,

* Fabyan.

come nearer and nearer round the circling watch-fire of some northern travellers. At this time the friar, turning to one of the guards who stood near him, said, "The mists are needed no more now—King Edward hath got the day—eh?"

"Certes, great master," quoth the guard, "nothing now lacks to the king's triumph, except the death of the earl."

"Infamous nigromancer, hear that!" cried Bungey to Adam. "What now avail thy bombards and thy talisman! Harkye!—tell me the secret of the last—of the damnable engine under my feet, and I may spare thy life."

Adam shrugged his shoulders in impatient disdain; "Unless I gave thee my science, my secret were profitless to thee. Villain and numskull, do thy worst."

The friar made a sign to a soldier who stood behind Adam, and the soldier silently drew the end of the rope which girded the scholar's neck round a bough of the leafless tree. "Hold!" whispered the friar, "not till I give the word.—The earl may recover himself yet," he added to himself. And therewith he began once more to vociferate his incantations. Meanwhile the eyes of Sibyll had turned for a moment from her father; for the burst of sunshine, lighting up the valley below, had suddenly given to her eyes, in the distance, the gable-ends of the old farm-house, with the wintry orchard,—no longer, alas! smiling with starry blossoms. Far remote from the battle-field was that abode of peace—that once happy home, where she had watched the coming of the false one!

Loftier and holier were the thoughts of the fated king. He had turned his face from the field, and his eyes were fixed upon the tower of the church behind.

And while he so gazed, the knoll from the belfry began solemnly to chime. It was now near the hour of the Sabbath prayers, and amidst horror and carnage, still the holy custom was not suspended.

"Hark!" said the king, mournfully—"That chime summons many a soul to God!"

While thus the scene on the eminence of Hadley, Edward, surrounded by Hastings, Gloucester, and his principal captains, took advantage of the unexpected sunshine to scan the foe and its position, with the eye of his intuitive genius for all that can slaughter man. "This day," he said, "brings no victory, assures no crown, if Warwick escape alive. To you, Lovell and Ratcliffe, I intrust two hundred knights;—your sole care—the head of the rebel earl!"

"And Montagu?" said Ratcliffe.

"Montagu? Nay—poor Montagu, I loved him as well once, as my own mother's son; and Montagu," he muttered to himself, "I never wronged, and therefore him I can forgive! Spare the marquis.—I mislike that wood; they must have more force within than that handful on the skirts betrays. Come hither, D'Eyncourt."

And a few minutes afterwards, Warwick and his men saw two parties of horse leave the main body—one for the right hand, one the left—followed by long detachments of pikes, which they protected; and then the central array marched slowly and steadily on towards the scanty foe. The design was obvious—to surround on all sides the enemy, driven to its last desperate bay. But Montagu and his brother had not been idle in the breathing pause; they had planted the greater portion of the archers skilfully among the trees. They had placed their pikemen on the verge of

the barricades, made by sharp stakes and fallen timber, and where their rampart was unguarded by the pass which had been left free for the horsemen, Hilyard and his stoutest fellows took their post, filling the gap with breasts of iron.

And now, as with horns and clarions—with a sea of plumes, and spears, and pennons, the multitudinous deathsmen came on, Warwick, towering in the front, not one feather on his eagle crest despoiled or shorn, stood, dismounted, his visor still raised, by his renowned steed. Some of the men had by Warwick's order removed the mail from the destrier's breast; and the noble animal, relieved from the weight, seemed as unexhausted as its rider; save where the champed foam had bespecked its glossy hide, not a hair was turned; and the onguard of the Yorkists heard its fiery snort, as they moved slowly on. This figure of horse and horseman stood prominently forth, amidst the little band. And Lovell, riding by Ratcliffe's side, whispered—"Beshrew me, I would rather King Edward had asked for mine own head, than that gallant earl's!"

"Tush, youth," said the inexorable Ratcliffe—"I care not of what steps the ladder of mine ambition may be made!"

While they were thus speaking, Warwick, turning to Montagu and his knights, said—

"Our sole hope is in the courage of our men. And, as at Touton, when I gave the throne to yon false man, I slew, with my own hand, my noble Malech, to show that on that spot I would win or die, and by that sacrifice so fired the soldiers, that we turned the day—so now—oh, gentleman, in another hour ye would jeer me, for my hand fails: this hand that the poor beast hath so often fed from! Saladin, last of thy race, serve

me now in death as in life. Not for my sake, oh noblest steed that ever bore a knight—not for mine this offering!"

He kissed the destrier on his frontal, and Saladin, as if conscious of the coming blow, bent his proud crest humbly, and licked his lord's steel-clad hand. So associated together had been horse and horseman, that had it been a human sacrifice, the bystanders could not have been more moved. And when, covering the charger's eyes with one hand, the earl's dagger descended, bright and rapid—a groan went through the ranks. But the effect was unspeakable! The men knew at once, that to them, and them alone, their lord intrusted his fortunes and his life—they were nerved to more than mortal daring. No escape for Warwick—why, then, in Warwick's person they lived and died! Upon foe as upon friend, the sacrifice produced all that could tend to strengthen the last refuge of despair. Even Edward, where he rode in the van, beheld and knew the meaning of the deed. Victorious Touton rushed back upon his memory with a thrill of strange terror and remorse.

"He will die as he has lived," said Gloucester, with admiration. "If I live for such a field, God grant me such a death!"

As the words left the duke's lips, and Warwick, one foot on his dumb friend's corpse, gave the mandate, a murderous discharge from the archers in the covert, rattled against the line of the Yorkists, and the foe, still advancing, stepped over a hundred corpses to the conflict. Despite the vast preponderance of numbers, the skill of Warwick's archers, the strength of his position, the obstacle to the cavalry made by the barricades, rendered the attack perilous in the extreme. But the or-

ders of Edward were prompt and vigorous. He cared not for the waste of life, and as one rank fell, another rushed on. High before the barricades, stood Montagu, Warwick, and the rest of that indomitable chivalry, the flower of the ancient Norman heroism. As idly beat the waves upon a rock as the ranks of Edward upon that serried front of steel. The sun still shone in heaven, and still Edward's conquest was unassured. Nay, if Marmaduke could yet bring back the troops of Somerset upon the rear of the foe, Montagu and the earl felt that the victory might be for them. And often the earl paused, to hearken for the cry of "Somerset" on the gale, and often Montagu raised his visor to look for the banners and the spears of the Lancastrian duke. And ever, as the earl listened and Montagu scanned the field, larger and larger seemed to spread the armament of Edward. The regiment which boasted the stubborn energy of Alwyn was now in movement, and, encouraged by the young Saxon's hardihood, the Londoners marched on, unawed by the massacre of their predecessors. But Alwyn, avoiding the quarter defended by the knights, defiled a little towards the left, where his quick eye, inured to the northern fogs, had detected the weakness of the barricade in the spot where Hilyard was stationed; and this pass Alwyn (discarding the bow) resolved to attempt at the point of the pike—the weapon answering to our modern bayonet. The first rush which he headed was so impetuous as to effect an entry. The weight of the numbers behind urged on the foremost, and Hilyard had not sufficient space for the sweep of the two-handed sword which had done good work that day. While here the conflict became fierce and doubtful, the right wing led by D'Eyncourt had pierced the wood,

and, surprised to discover no ambush, fell upon the archers in the rear. The scene was now inexpressibly terrific; cries and groans, and the ineffable roar and yell of human passion resounded demon-like through the shade of the leafless trees. And at this moment, the provident and rapid generalship of Edward had moved up one of his heavy bombards. Warwick and Montagu, and most of the knights, were called from the barricades to aid the archers thus assailed behind, but an instant before that defence was shattered into air by the explosion of the bombard. In another minute horse and foot rushed through the opening. And amidst all the din was heard the voice of Edward, "Strike! and spare not; we win the day!" "We win the day!—victory!—victory!" repeated the troops behind; rank caught the sound from rank—and file from file—it reached the captive Henry, and he paused in prayer; it reached the ruthless friar, and he gave the sign to the hireling at his shoulder; it reached the priest as he entered, unmoved, the church of Hadley. And the bell, changing its note into a quicker and sweeter chime, invited the living to prepare for death, and the soul to rise above the cruelty, and the falsehood, and the pleasure and the pomp, and the wisdom and the glory of the world! And suddenly, as the chime ceased, there was heard, from the eminence hard by, a shriek of agony—a female shriek—drowned by the roar of a bombard in the field below.

On pressed the Yorkists through the pass forced by Alwyn. "Yield thee, stout fellow," said the bold trader to Hilyard, whose dogged energy, resembling his own, moved his admiration, and in whom, by the accent in which Robin called his men, he recognised a north-countryman;—"Yield, and I will see that thou goest safe in life and limb—look round—ye are beaten."

"Fool!" answered Hilyard, setting his teeth—"the People are never beaten!" And as the words left his lips, the shot from the recharged bombard shattered him piecemeal.

"On for London and the crown!" cried Alwyn—"the citizens *are* the people!"

At this time, through the general crowd of the Yorkists, Ratcliffe and Lovell, at the head of their appointed knights, galloped forward to accomplish their crowning mission.

Behind the column which still commemorates "the great battle" of that day, stretches now a trilateral patch of pasture-land, which faces a small house. At that time this space was rough forest ground, and where now, in the hedge, rise two small trees, types of the diminutive offspring of our niggard and ignoble civilisation, rose then two huge oaks, coeval with the warriors of the Norman Conquest. They grew close together, yet, though their roots interlaced—though their branches mingled, one had not taken nourishment from the other. They stood, equal in height and grandeur, the twin giants of the wood. Before these trees, whose ample trunks protected them from the falchions in the rear, Warwick and Montagu took their last post. In front rose, literally, mounds of the slain, whether of foe or friend; for round the two brothers to the last had gathered the brunt of war, and they towered now, almost solitary in valour's sublime despair, amidst the wrecks of battle, and against the irresistible march of fate. As side by side they had gained this spot, and the vulgar assailants drew back, leaving the bodies of the dead their last defence from death, they turned their visors to each other, as for one latest farewell on earth.

"Forgive me, Richard," said Montagu—"forgive me thy death;—had I not so blindly believed in Clarence's fatal order, the savage Edward had never passed alive through the pass of Pontefract."

"Blame not thyself," replied Warwick. "We are but the instruments of a wiser Will. God assoil thee, brother mine. We leave this world to tyranny and vice. Christ receive our souls!"

For a moment their hands clasped, and then all was grim silence.

Wide and far, behind and before, in the gleam of the sun, stretched the victorious armament, and that breathing-pause sufficed to show the grandeur of their resistance—the grandest of all spectacles, even in its hopeless extremity—the defiance of brave hearts to the brute force of the Many. Where they stood they were visible to thousands, but not a man stirred against them. The memory of Warwick's past achievements—the consciousness of his feats that day—all the splendour of his fortunes and his name, made the mean fear to strike, and the brave ashamed to murder. The gallant D'Eyncourt sprung from his steed, and advanced to the spot. His followers did the same.

"Yield, my lords—yield! Ye have done all that men could do."

"Yield, Montagu," whispered Warwick. "Edward can harm not thee. Life has sweets; so they say, at least."

"Not with power and glory gone. We yield not, Sir Knight," answered the marquis, in a calm tone.

"Then die, and make room for the new men whom ye so have scorned!" exclaimed a fierce voice; and Ratcliffe, who had neared the spot, dismounted, and hallooed on his bloodhounds.

Seven points might the shadow have traversed on the dial, and, before Warwick's axe and Montagu's sword, seven souls had gone to judgment. In that brief crisis, amidst the general torpor and stupefaction and awe of the bystanders, round one little spot centred still a war.

But numbers rushed on numbers, as the fury of conflict urged on the lukewarm. Montagu was beaten to his knee—Warwick covered him with his body—a hundred axes resounded on the earl's stooping casque—a hundred blades gleamed round the joints of his harness:—a simultaneous cry was heard:—over the mounds of the slain, through the press into the shadow of the oaks, dashed Gloucester's charger. The conflict had ceased—the executioners stood mute in a half-circle. Side by side, axe and sword still griped in their iron hands, lay Montagu and Warwick.

The young duke, his visor raised, contemplated the fallen foes in silence. Then dismounting, he unbraced with his own hand the earl's helmet. Revived for a moment by the air, the hero's eyes unclosed, his lips moved, he raised, with a feeble effort, the gory battle-axe, and the armed crowd recoiled in terror. But the earl's soul, dimly conscious, and about to part, had escaped from that scene of strife—its later thoughts of wrath and vengeance—to more gentle memories, to such memories as fade the last from true and manly hearts!

"Wife!—child!" murmured the earl, indistinctly. "Anne—Anne! Dear ones, God comfort ye!" And with these words the breath went—the head fell heavily on its mother earth—the face set, calm and undistorted, as the face of a soldier should be, when a brave death has been worthy of a brave life.

"So," muttered the dark and musing Gloucester, unconscious of the throng; "so perishes the Race of Iron. Low lies the last baron who could control the throne and command the people. The Age of Force expires with knighthood and deeds of arms. And over this dead great man I see the New Cycle dawn. Happy, henceforth, he who can plot, and scheme, and fawn, and smile!" Waking, with a start, from his reverie, the splendid dissimulator said, as in sad reproof,—"Ye have been over hasty, knights and gentlemen. The House of York is mighty enough to have spared such noble foes. Sound trumpets! Fall in file! Way, there—way. King Edward comes! Long live the King!"

CHAPTER VII

THE LAST PILGRIMS IN THE LONG PROCESSION TO THE COMMON BOURNE

The king and his royal brothers, immediately after the victory, rode back to London to announce their triumph. The foot-soldiers still stayed behind to recruit themselves after the sore fatigue; and towards the eminence by Hadley Church, the peasants and villagers of the district had pressed in awe and in wonder; for on that spot had Henry (now sadly led back to a prison, never again to unclose to his living form) stood to watch the destruction of the host gathered in his name—and to that spot the corpses of Warwick and Montagu were removed, while a bier was prepared to convey their remains to London *—and on that spot

* The bodies of Montagu and the earl were exhibited bareheaded at St. Paul's church for three days, "that no pretences

had the renowned friar conjured the mists—exorcised the enchanted guns—and defeated the horrible machinations of the Lancastrian wizard.

And towards the spot, and through the crowd, a young Yorkist captain passed with a prisoner he had captured, and whom he was leading to the tent of the Lord Hastings, the only one of the commanders from whom mercy might be hoped, and who had tarried behind the king and his royal brothers to make preparations for the removal of the mighty dead.

"Keep close to me, Sir Marmaduke," said the Yorkist; "we must look to Hastings to appease the king; and, if he hope not to win your pardon, he may, at least, after such a victory, aid one foe to fly."

"Care not for me, Alwyn," said the knight; "when Somerset was deaf, save to his own fears, I came back to die by my chieftain's side, alas, too late—too late! Better now death than life! What kin, kith, ambition, love, were to other men, was Lord Warwick's smile to me!"

Alwyn kindly respected his prisoner's honest emotion, and took advantage of it to lead him away from the spot where he saw knights and warriors thickest grouped, in soldier-like awe and sadness, round the Hero-Brothers. He pushed through a humbler crowd of peasants, and citizens, and women with babes at their

of their being alive *might stir up any rebellion afterwards*;" "they were then carried down to the Priory of Bisham, in Berkshire, where, among their ancestors by the mother's side (the Earls of Salisbury), the two unquiet brothers rest in one tomb." "The large river of their blood, divided now into many streams, runs so small, they are hardly observed as they flow by." (*a*)—*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

(*a*) Habington's "Life of Edward IV.," one of the most eloquent compositions in the language, though incorrect as a history.

breast; and suddenly saw a troop of timbrel-women dancing round a leafless tree, and chanting some wild, but mirthful and joyous doggrel.

"What obscene and ill-seasoned revelry is this?" said the trader, to a gaping yeoman.

"They are but dancing, poor girls, round the wicked wizard, whom Friar Bungey caused to be strangled,—and his witch daughter."

A chill foreboding seized upon Alwyn; he darted forward, scattering peasant and tymbestere, with his yet bloody sword. His feet stumbled against some broken fragments; it was the poor Eureka, shattered, at last, for the sake of the diamond! Valueless to the great friar, since the science of the owner could not pass to his executioner—valueless, the mechanism and the invention, the labour and the genius, but the superstition, and the folly, and the delusion, *had* their value, and the impostor who destroyed the engine clutched the jewel!

From the leafless tree was suspended the dead body of a man, beneath, lay a female, dead too; but whether by the hand of man or the mercy of Heaven, there was no sign to tell. Scholar and Child, Knowledge and Innocence, alike were cold; the grim Age had devoured them as it devours ever those before, as behind, its march—and confounds, in one common doom, the too guileless and the too wise!

"Why crowd ye thus, knaves?" said a commanding voice.

"Ha, Lord Hastings!—approach! behold!" exclaimed Alwyn.

"Ha—ha!" shouted Graul, as she led her sisters from the spot, wheeling, and screaming, and tossing up their timbrels—"Ha! the witch and her lover!—

Ha—ha! Foul is fair!—Ha—ha! Witchcraft and death go together, as thou mayst learn at the last, sleek wooer."

And, peradventure, when, long years afterwards, accusations of witchcraft, wantonness, and treason, resounded in the ears of Hastings, and, at the signal of Gloucester, rushed in the armed doomsmen, those ominous words echoed back upon his soul!

At that very hour the gates of the Tower were thrown open to the multitude. Fresh from his victory, Edward and his brothers had gone to render thanksgivings at St. Paul's (they were devout—those three Plantagenets!), thence to Baynard's Castle, to escort the queen and her children once more to the Tower. And, now, the sound of trumpets stilled the joyous uproar of the multitude, for, in the balcony of the casement that looked towards the chapel, the herald had just announced that King Edward would show himself to the people. On every inch of the courtyard, climbing up wall and palisade, soldier, citizen, thief, harlot,—age, childhood, all the various conditions and epochs of multiform life, swayed, clung, murmured, moved, jostled, trampled;—the beings of the little hour!

High from the battlements against the westering beam floated Edward's conquering flag—a sun shining to the sun. Again, and a third time, rang the trumpets, and on the balcony, his crown upon his head, but his form still sheathed in armour, stood the king. What mattered to the crowd his falseness and his perfidy—his licentiousness and cruelty? All vices ever vanish in success! Hurrah for King Edward! THE MAN OF THE AGE suited the age, had valour for its war and cunning for its peace, and the sympathy of

the age was with him! So there stood the king;—at his right hand, Elizabeth, with her infant boy (the heir of England) in her arms—the proud face of the duchess seen over the queen's shoulder. By Elizabeth's side was the Duke of Gloucester, leaning on his sword, and at the left of Edward, the perjured Clarence bowed his fair head to the joyous throng! At the sight of the victorious king, of the lovely queen, and, above all, of the young male heir, who promised length of days to the line of York, the crowd burst forth with a hearty cry—"Long live the king and the king's son!" Mechanically Elizabeth turned her moistened eyes from Edward to Edward's brother, and suddenly, as with a mother's prophetic instinct, clasped her infant closer to her bosom, when she caught the glittering and fatal eye of Richard, Duke of Gloucester (York's young hero of the day, Warwick's grim avenger in the future), fixed upon that harmless life—destined to interpose a feeble obstacle between the ambition of a ruthless intellect and the heritage of the English throne!